PARABLES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

J. W. G. Ward

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Fifty-two Sermonettes

BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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TO

EILEEN AND BEECHER

AND

THE CHILDREN OF EMANUEL,
BOOTLE AND NEW COURT, LONDON

INTRODUCTION

It is told of Abraham Lincoln that once he was asked to express his opinion of a book of poems, and did so by saying: "These poems will be greatly liked by persons who like poems of this sort." There may have been some veiled sarcasm in that statement—but by no means necessarily so. No poems are liked by all people. It is equally true that every book makes its appeal to certain persons—and having read these Parables, I am constrained to say, and that with no suspicion of sarcasm, they will be greatly loved by people who love stories of this kind. And who are these people? Unquestionably the very "Little People" for whom they are written.

Mr. Ward has written with understanding. He is today conducting one of the most conspicuously successful ministries in London, in the church of which I was minister for four years, twenty years ago. He has a remarkable hold upon his young people; and equally helps the great crowds of busy men and women who throng the sanctuary to the doors. In these Parables we discover something of the secret of his success. Other secrets would be revealed in his preaching and pastoral work. Here he is with the children in the great world of romance, imagination, make-believe; and it is all

so child-like, that a child might have written. That is the greatest charm of the book. Very cleverly too, he gets in his moral, his quiet hint at a lesson to be drawn, without ever seeming to preach. I believe that Mothers everywhere will welcome these Parables for their children; and I am sure the children will get genuine delight in reading them.

G. Campbell Morgan.

FOREWORD

New Court Church, of which the author is minister, is one of the famous London churches founded in 1662, during the time of the Puritans, and quaint old Richard Baxter was among its early ministers. The original site near Fleet Street is now occupied by the Law Courts, and the present spacious sanctuary has been the sphere of some notable ministers. World-famed men like Dr. Campbell Morgan, Ossian Davies, and A. C. Hill have been its pastors, and of their successor the *British Weekly* says: "That very able young minister at Tollington Park, the Rev. J. W. G. Ward, can gather round him on a hot June evening a congregation which fills his church, even to the farthest window-seats of the galleries. There is a very stimulating earnestness of purpose in Mr. Ward's methods." And these Parables have gained such golden opinions for their originality and charm, that they are published in response to a widely-expressed desire.

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Where truth in closest words shall fail,
Truth embodied in a tale,
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

—*Tennyson.*

PARABLES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

I

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

SOHRAB was just like you. He wanted to make a success of his life. But his parents being dead, he had no one to help him, except the old lady with whom he lived. When he asked her the secret of success, she would shake her head and say, "Ah! that is more than I ever learnt. No one knows that, unless it be the great ones, and even if they know, they will not tell!"

Sometimes the boy wandered into the Senate, and listened to the wise men there, but if they knew the secret, they took good care to hide it. And of all the folk he asked, none could give him the answer he sought.

One night, as Sohrab lay awake, thinking of what he meant to be when he grew up, he was startled by a bright light. It may have been the moon, but as he looked, a beautiful lady stepped out of the silvery beam, and said, "You called me! What can I do?"

The little fellow was about to tell her she was mistaken, when he remembered just in time that it is always rude to contradict a lady, and so he asked, "But who are you?"

The lady smiled. "I am the Fairy of a child's wish. If there is anything you want more than another, I can give it you—provided it is for your good."

"What a splendid chance!" thought Sohrab. "Did she know the secret of success? At any rate, there was no harm in asking her." And so he told her what he wanted to know more than anything else in the world.

The Fairy looked puzzled for a moment. Then she said, "No one can tell you that. You must discover it for yourself!" Then she added, as she saw the disappointment in the boy's face, "But I may be able to help you to find the secret. Shall we try together?"

She led the way to the palace of a prince. It was a beautiful place, all granite and gold, and numbers of servants were flitting about the rooms, getting ready for the prince's return. Some were arranging flowers in vases. Others were laying the table in the huge banqueting hall with costly vessels of gold, while each one seemed to know exactly what he had to do, and went on with his work without paying any attention to the Fairy or the boy.

"See anything of the secret?" she whispered in Sohrab's ear.

"No," replied he, "unless you mean that one must work for the prince in order to be successful. Is that it?"

"Not exactly," said the Fairy, "but let us try again."

They left the hall, and round by the stables some grooms were breaking-in a number of Arab horses for the prince's use. The boy was delighted as he watched the antics of the horses, trying to throw the men from their backs, for they had never been ridden before. But when all their efforts proved in vain, the horses would come back flecked with foam, but conquered, and the grooms could do anything with them.

"Is the secret here, do you think?" asked the Fairy.

"I don't know," said Sohrab, "unless you mean that the boy who would succeed must first learn to obey."

"That is quite true, and I am glad you saw that much, but we have not yet got the whole secret. Suppose we have still another try."

He was feeling a little discouraged as the Fairy led him away, but it was some comfort at least to know that she was trying to help him. But where was she taking him now? They had stopped at a long, low building beyond the stables, and when they peeped in, they saw a man with dozens and dozens of lamps that he was trimming and cleaning.

It was the lamp-room of the palace. There were small lamps and tall lamps. Some were of fine wrought gold, and others of plain metal. And it took the man all day getting them ready for evening.

Sohrab noticed that when the man had filled and finished a lamp, he would light it and leave it

burning until he was ready with the next. Then he would light that, and put out the first. This was the way he tested them, to see that they were quite in order for the palace.

"What a fine array you have," said the Fairy. "Will you light them all, and let my friend see what they can do altogether?"

The man seemed to know the Fairy, for he at once closed the shutters and taking a taper, he lighted every lamp he had ready. The dark room blazed and flashed as though it were the palace of the sun itself!

"But has this anything to do with the secret?" asked the boy of the Fairy. "Even with all the lamps lit, I can't see anything of it!"

She smiled as though she thought he were jesting, but in reality she was sorry for him. "Let us have a chat together," she said, leading the way to the grounds. "Now tell me what we have seen."

"Well, first we saw the prince's servants all as busy as bees."

"Yes," the Fairy said. "And what next?"

"The horses trying to throw their riders—and they couldn't."

"Quite right! And now?"

"All the palace lamps alight."

"Then can't you put the three together and guess what they mean?"

"I wish I could," said the boy.

"Then we must try together," she said encouragingly. "The servants intent on doing their prince's bidding mean for you: Do right! The riders, keeping the saddle in spite of all the horses could do, mean: Hold tight! And the lamps

showed us that even the tiniest flame has its part in chasing away the gloom. That means: Be bright!

"Do Right! Hold Tight! Be Bright! That is the secret of success as far as mortals may know it!"

II

A CHAT ABOUT THE CLOCK

YOU may have heard people speak of a clock as a good one, but do you know what clock-goodness is? The two things are not quite the same.

Of course, a clock has a nice clean face, but then yours is always clean, even though it is not kept

under a glass like the clock's. The clock goes on with its work whether anyone is looking or not, but you never want watching, for you always get your lessons done, and you have never to be reminded to do what mother told you. The clock keeps its hands out of mischief, and it never strikes anyone. Even when it strikes the hour, the hands do not do the striking. But I can tell

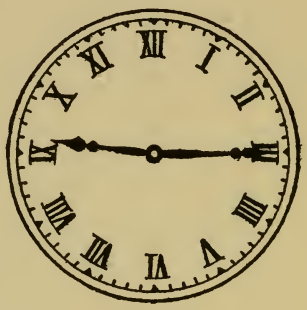
you what they do. They are very wonderful hands, for they can teach us what clock-goodness means.

The hands teach us good behaviour: Twice in every twenty-four hours, the hands point straight up and down. That means 6 o'clock, but it means something else. Can you guess what? Straight up and down means we must be upright in conduct; down-right in duty. We must strive to do the right, and we must do it with our might. Being down-right in duty means working hard at our

lessons and never complaining when we have to do something that is hard or unpleasant. But there! You are always like the clock in that!

Those hands teach us to pray, for at the beginning of each day, say one minute past 12 a. m., again at 12 noon, and again at 12 midnight, the clock puts its hands together before its face just like a child saying its prayers. Is that too often? No one says his prayers in the middle of the day? Well, you will find that one brave man used to pray three times every day, although the king had forbidden it altogether. His name was Daniel.

Here is just another thing. They teach us how to be helpful. Twice every twelve hours—at 9-15 and 2-45, you see them stretched out as though they were saying, "Here are two hands willing to do any good we can. We are ready to carry or lift, ready to do a little kindness for anyone, ready for any duty the day may bring!" And this is the readiness that pleases mother so much. How delighted she would be if you really tried to help her—and did it willingly, too! Just fancy how



she would feel if you were to go to her before you went out for that game of which you are so fond and said, "Is there anything you want me to do before I go?" What a light would come into her face!

It is worth trying to be as good as the clock! And you can easily remember what the clock says, for it is:

Hands up and down .....RIGHTEOUSNESS
Hands together .....REVERENCE
Hands open wide .....READINESS

And as you are now getting big, you will know that just as the hands of the clock depend on what is going on behind the face, so our hands move according to the heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

III

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

PIERRE was a strange fellow, and no mistake. He always found something to grumble about. "A nice day!" one of his neighbours might remark, but Pierre would reply something about it raining before night. Or if someone said that the crops were good, the old man would argue that they might be a lot better—and so on.

People got to dislike Pierre for this. "If there's anything wrong," they said, "he's sure to find it; or if there isn't, then he'll make it." So they crossed the road when they saw him coming, or suddenly remembered they were in a hurry. And Pierre noticed all this. It made him sad, for strange to say, he wanted to be happy like other people, and he knew that this trick of complaining was costing him many a friend.

One day, a stranger spoke to him as he stood by the gate of his cottage. "Lovely view you have from here!" said the traveller.

Pierre stared at him and then replied, "Well, I can't say that I've ever noticed it before, but we do get a terrible lot of fog in these parts."

"Never noticed it!" said the traveller in astonishment. "Why, you'll tell me next you've never noticed what a bonny lot of children you have about here. What?"

But Pierre had noticed them all right, though he had seldom thought about their looks. All he knew was that they annoyed him with their noisy play, and sometimes he wished——

The stranger broke in on his thoughts. "Say, what's the matter with you, my friend? You must excuse me saying so, but you look about the most miserable man I've ever met. Perhaps you're not well?"

Now in the ordinary way, Pierre would have been vexed if any of his neighbours had spoken to him like that, but there was something about this traveller that made the old man's heart warm to him, and the result was that Pierre told him all his troubles. He was always hunting for happiness, but try as he would he could never find it, and so he was gradually becoming a nuisance to everyone because of his habit of grumbling.

"I know the very thing," said the man with a smile. "There's a place over the hill where they cure people of the miserables. It is called the School of Happiness. Why don't you try it?"

That was something new to Pierre, so next morning he set off. He found the place without much trouble and pulled the bell. After a few moments, the door was opened by a jolly-looking porter who said, "This way, please!"

How did he know what the old man wanted? It must have been the look on his face. Anyway, he led Pierre down a long, long passage till they came to a door. "You are looking for the secret of happiness, aren't you? Well, open that door and you'll discover it. Ring the bell inside when

you are ready to go. No, there's nothing to pay!" And with that, the porter was gone.

Open the door! It was more easily said than done. Old Pierre tried it. It was locked and he could not see any key. He felt along the top ledge of the door. Then he looked under the mat. No key! Happy thought! Perhaps there was one on his own bunch that would do. So after trying six or seven, he found one that fitted. The lock gave and the door was open.

Wondering what it all meant, Pierre stumbled into a small room flooded with sunshine. But the room was quite bare except for a long table by one wall. On this were scores and scores of beautiful ornaments, vases and bowls. Some were fine porcelain, and others cut glass, but he noticed that every one he picked up had either a crack or a flaw or else a piece was chipped out.

He was interested, for he was fond of collecting old china and glass. "I wonder what these are for?" he mused. "It's a pity they are imperfect like this. They would be valuable but for the flaws. There!" he said, turning one of the pieces with the blemish to the back, "one can't see anything wrong with that now. But I mustn't waste time over these. This is not what I've come for. Where's this wonderful secret?"

Pierre was puzzled. He looked along the table, under it, round it, on the window-sill, but no secret could he find. And then he got vexed. He thought someone was playing a prank on him, so he determined to have nothing more to do with the matter, but to get back home.

He strode to the door, but to his dismay, he found it had swung shut behind him, and in his excitement he had left his keys hanging outside in the lock. He was a prisoner!

He rang the bell furiously, and after what seemed quite a long time, he heard footsteps in the passage. The door opened, and a laughing face looked in. "So you have discovered it!"

"Look here!" said Pierre, "What's the meaning of this? As soon as I get back, I shall tell the police—shutting people up here and pretending to teach them the way of happiness. Monstrous, I call it!"

"Just a minute! Just a minute!" replied the porter. "Sit down and I'll explain everything. Beg pardon, of course you can't. I forgot there's no chair. But you've got the secret all right—when you like to use it!"

Pierre started to stammer something, but the porter took not the slightest notice and went on, "First of all, you had to unlock the door for yourself: everyone carries a key somewhere about him that will do it. And then, wondering what it all meant, you saw the flaws in these ornaments. Well, there's a flaw in most things in this world, or a crack, and you have to look for the beauty that is there as well for those who can see it. Yes, look for the beauty—and turn the crack to the back!"

"You mean that is the secret?" broke in Pierre.

"To be sure it is! Look for the best in people, and for the beautiful things in the world and not only will you find them, but you will find the way of happiness as well!"

"Don't look for the flaws as you go through life,
And even when you find them,
It is wise and kind to be sometimes blind,
And seek for the virtue behind them!"

"Well, I declare! Turn the crack to the back!" chuckled Pierre as he trudged home.

IV

THE HEART OF A HERO

FRANK was not what you would call a hero, though he badly wanted to be one. That was his greatest wish! But then, he lived in a dull, factory town, with drab streets, and houses huddled together as though they were frightened of the great works that sent out black smoke just like so many dragons.

Frank had no father, and so to keep the little home going, his mother had to take in sewing from one of the warehouses. All day long, and sometimes far into the night, too, you might have heard the sewing-machine buzzing away in the one room that was called home.

The boy used to go to school most days. It was not that he liked it, but he knew that he must learn so that he could work for his mother when he grew up. There was one thing, however, that he did like about school. He could read there about famous men who had done daring deeds and who had left behind them a great example. Drake, the dashing sailor, and Captain Cook, Robin Hood and his merry men, Nelson and Wellington, and many more were all favourites. But he did not stop with these—pirates and bushrangers, travellers and explorers, all delighted the boy who wanted to be a hero and do something great.

You can guess how tired Frank became of the tiny room in which he lived when he had read of the rolling seas and the towering mountains, for the only thing he could see from the window was a roof with some chimney-stacks.

The truth is, he was just a bit discontented with his lot, and the work he had to do made him feel that he could never be anything much. What work? We must whisper this, for Frank would not like anyone to know of it. His mother had taught him to sew! And when he got home from school, the poor old boy had to set to work, sewing the buttons on the garments his mother had made. It was nearly as bad as carrying the bundles of finished work back to the factory and hearing the other boys laughing at him as they played in the street. He did wish he could be a hero and get away from it all!

One day, he had a great idea. There was a minister who lived near Frank's school. He preached in the little chapel with the tin roof and the queer poke-bonnet windows, and Frank had heard that, like your minister, he loved girls and boys, and wanted to be their friend. So Frank made up his mind to go and see him, and ask him how to make dreams come true.

He was shown into a room with rows and rows of books all standing straight like policemen on parade and looking very severe. "I guess there's something in those books about Robin Hood and all those fellows," said the boy to himself. But he had not time to think about them any more, for just then in walked the minister.

Frank saw that he was such a kindly old gentle-

man that he told him at once all about his home, the work he had to do, and the plans he had formed, and he went on, "You see, sir, I don't much care what it is, whether I'm a pirate or an outlaw, a soldier or a sailor, but I've got to be a hero!" Then he stopped. What would the minister think of him, talking like that?

The old gentleman did not laugh. Instead, he just smiled and said, "Quite right, my boy! But you have got the idea wrong. The answer to your question, Where can I be a hero and how? is in the very word, only you must turn it round. A hero? —O, *here!* You can be heroic by doing your duty like a man, and helping your mother just where you are!"

Frank's face fell. This was not the answer he expected, but his friend went on, "You have the hero head; what you need is the hero heart. Men show their bravery by fighting and all that, and you must fight against sin and everything that is wrong. I want you to be too much of a hero to shirk your duty because it means something you don't like. Think how heroic your mother must be, working so hard for you. You must show her that you, too, can be brave about those bundles, that you are hero enough to help her. It is ever so much better than grieving her by grumbling because you can't have just what you want. . . . And look here! You must be a real hero not by going away to some foreign land to do great things, but by doing them here!"

Of course, Frank was greatly disappointed. He had thought that the good man would show him the way at once to make his dreams come true.

But when his mother got back from the warehouse that night, what do you think she found? The table was laid for tea, and an eager voice said as well as it could, considering the piece of bread and butter that was in the way, for Frank had cut a chunk just to help him to wait, "I say, Mother, you look tired! I'm doing the lion's share of the work after tea, while you rest a bit!"

She did not know what it meant, for she had no idea where Frank had called on his way home from school, but when she heard him humming:

> "I want to be a hero and bravely take my stand
> Wherever duty calls me, or work awaits my hand,"

she felt like joining in.

After all, I think the old minister was right. Don't you? The hero-head is good, but the hero-heart is better!

V

A TALE OF A TOY-SHOP

THIS toy-shop was a favourite place. The children who had plenty of pennies knew it well, but those who had none seemed to know it better for they would flatten their noses against the windows, and with their grubby fingers point out the toys that belonged to *them!*

Now in one window were two fierce-looking animals with brown shaggy coats. One was a bear named Teddy; the other, a dog called Tubby and he had great rolling eyes that made him look very wise. They both liked to be admired by the children, but I do not think it was good for either of them, for it made them rather vain and a tiny bit quarrelsome.

Well, one evening, just before closing time, the shopkeeper had all the things taken out, so that the window could be cleaned and rearranged, and the toys were laid on one of the counters.

This greatly annoyed both the bear and the dog. It meant they might lose the place they had enjoyed in the front of the window, and the children would admire them no more. So as the rivals sat there, side by side, on the counter, anyone could see that trouble was brewing.

The shop was locked up, and everything was

quiet for a time, until the bear said crossly, "This is all your fault!" (You are never as cross as a bear, are you?)

"What do you mean?" asked the dog.

"Well, you call yourself the friend of man, but no one seems to want you or you would have been sold. I don't believe you are anything of the sort!"

Now if the dog had been as sensible as girls and boys are when their school-mates say unkind things, he would have taken no notice. At any rate, he ought to have known that it takes two to make a quarrel. But he was no better than the bear, and he retorted, "I don't call myself the king of the forest, anyway, like you do. Who gave you the right to a name like that? Why, you growl if anyone touches you!"

"What right have I? Well, imagine that!" answered the bear. "Do you know that I can climb high trees, and that when I take my foes in my arms they cry for mercy? Everyone is afraid of me. But you—why you run after the first one that whistles you. Compare your paltry paws with mine! I am king of the beasts!"

"Or else a beast of a king," replied the dog.

With that, the bear seized Tubby in a great hug. They snapped and snarled, grunted and growled, as they struggled together upon the counter, while the rest of the toys looked on with scorn and amusement.

Then something happened. In their anger, both animals had forgotten how narrow the counter was, and suddenly they rolled over and fell down, down, down, with a terrible bump to the floor.

But that was not the worst of it. It had been raining heavily that afternoon, and a lady who wanted a doll for a sick child, had stood her umbrella against that counter, so that a nice pool had formed there.

The bear and the dog fell right into this with a mighty splash! They were wet through, and having hurt their limbs as well as their pride neither felt like quarrelling any more. Teddy did not look much like a king, and Tubby was not the kind of friend you would have cared to own.

As they lay there, they could hear the other toys talking. The sailor-boy was telling the little girl doll in the pink frock what he thought. "It's a pity that those who have such a good opinion of themselves cannot behave like sensible mortals," he said. And she laughingly replied, "Oh, it is always the way. Those who pretend they are better than others behave worse. Teddy is a bit of a beast, but Tubby ought to have known better."

The two culprits felt very miserable, and you may be sure they were glad when morning came, and the shop door opened. But when the man saw Teddy and Tubby lying on the floor, looking so dirty, wet, and doleful, he said angrily, "Hello, what's this? Who is going to buy these things now?" He grasped one in each hand, and turning to one of his assistants, he said, "Just put these by the fire, please. We must dry them and see what we can do."

After a very hot time, the two animals felt more ashamed than ever. "This comes of boasting," said the bear. "Yes," replied the other, "but it's

all my fault. Let's be friends again!" And when no one was looking they shook hands.

Then the shopkeeper placed them side by side again, and put a ticket over their heads that proclaimed their silly conduct, for it read:

SHOP SOILED—GREATLY REDUCED.

And indeed they were. There is nothing that soils the heart and reduces our happiness like ill-temper, and though the two animals are good friends now, each would say if you asked him:

"To folk be kind, to faults be blind,
And never say, *I'm* best!"

VI

THE A. O. T. C.

IT was one evening during the great war, that just as Kenneth was going to bed, a letter came, and as it was from his big brother at the front, mother let him stay till it was read aloud. Then he was hurried off, much against his will, for it was getting late.

However, it was a good thing he had to hurry, for Kenneth had only just closed his eyes when the Angel of The Children came.

"Are you really the A. O. T. C.?" Kenneth asked.

"What ever is that?" laughed the Angel.

"Why, it means the Angel of The Children, and my brother always puts letters like that instead of names. We have heard from him to-night, and he says something about the R. A. M. C. and the A. O. T. C."

"Then I suppose I am the A. O. T. C.," replied his visitor. "But can you guess why I have come? I would like to know what you are going to be!"

"Well, I want to be a soldier," said the boy.

The Angel smiled. "Just what I thought! Then let us go."

They came to a lonely place among the hills,

where a number of rough-looking men sat round a fire. Kenneth had never seen anyone half as fierce as they were, but he did not tell the Angel that!

"These," said the messenger, "are the foes you must fight! Keep quiet and listen!"

A great stout man was saying, "But I've already told you, the boy is going to obey me."

"Is he?" interrupted another, who was a most disagreeable-looking fellow with limbs all twisted and bent. "That lad belongs to me, so leave him alone. Why, he's been on my side for quite a long time."

"Nonsense!" a third put in. "You are both wrong, for that particular young gentleman agreed to enter my service months ago."

The last speaker was lying on the ground lazily, and Kenneth noticed what an untidy, dirty fellow he looked. His hair was long and matted. His nails were like talons, and his clothes were all torn and muddy.

As the rest of the company quarrelled over the mysterious boy, the Angel beckoned him away.

"Who are those horrible men, and why have I to fight them?" the boy asked as soon as they were a few yards off.

"Don't you know?" The Angel looked troubled. "That stout man is Greed; the other, all twisted and deformed, is Spite, sometimes called Old Crossface; and that untidy fellow on the ground is Laziness. The others are all bad habits of one kind or another. You heard them claiming a certain boy. The boy is you."

"I'm afraid I can never conquer them all," sighed the boy.

"Afraid? And you a soldier? Look! the day is breaking; we must hasten."

They came to a castle which shone in the sun as though it were made of gold, and the Angel led the way through the gates, past the hall, up a wide staircase till they paused at a door over which Kenneth read:

"Take unto you the whole armour of God."

It was the armoury. Here there were hundreds of shields, and swords, helmets and coats of mail, and the boy's eyes danced with delight when he saw what the Angel was doing.

From the various shelves and racks, he was taking out an equipment—a suit of armour, a helmet just the right size for a boy. And after Kenneth had donned these at the Angel's bidding, the A. O. T. C. buckled a sword round the boy's waist, and put a shield in his hand.

"I say, that's fine! Now I can fight," he exclaimed. "Good-bye!"

"One moment!" said the Angel. "There is something else I want to show you."

He guided the boy along the gallery where countless pictures hung, and Kenneth thought he would never stop, for he found it rather awkward to walk in his armour. But at last, they stood before a great canvas. It showed a king in golden armour, mounted on a snow-white steed, and followed by a number of knights clad in the same way.

"You know who that is?" the Angel asked. "He is your Leader, and those knights who follow Him

are pledged to fight against greed, ill-temper, and every sinful habit. Will you follow Him too?"

Kenneth looked at the figure in silence for a moment. Then drawing his sword, he saluted just as he had seen the Lifeguards do. "Yes! I promise. I will try to follow Him and fight for Him every day!"

And with a glad smile, the A. O. T. C. had vanished.

VII

THE FEBRUARY FACE

HAVE you ever seen anyone with a February face? What, you do not know what it is? Well, in one of Shakespeare's stories, that you will read when you grow older, there is a man who meets another who is looking very cross, and he says:

> "Why, what's the matter
> That you have such a February face,
> So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?"

There was once a little fellow who was travelling to this earth. The journey was a long one. It took him 31 days, and he had no idea that it was so far. So you can guess that he was nearly as impatient to reach his destination as you are to get to the next school holiday.

When his train arrived, it was quite early in the morning. In fact, it was not yet light. And he was as cross as could be. I have noticed that it is generally first thing in the morning, just when we get up, that most of us are a little—never mind, we will let that pass.

When the traveller came out of the station, the street was deserted. The lamps blinked very sleepily at him, as though they had just woke up,

and the only person he could see was a policeman. So he took his courage in both hands and went up to him.

"Excuse me, officer. Are you what they call a 'special'?"

"No! my little man, I'm not. Are you?" he added, for he was fond of a bit of fun.

"In a way I am. That is, I am some one of special importance. And by the way, please do not 'little man' me," replied the traveller, trying to look very tall.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the officer, saluting. "Is there anything I can do?"

"I was wondering if you had seen anyone waiting for me—a crowd, for instance. The fact is, I was expecting to be met by quite a large number of friends. My brother was, I understand."

The policeman looked very thoughtful. Then he said, thinking that perhaps this was some royal personage, "Who might your brother be, sir?" The policeman thought this was rather a clever way of asking the traveller who *he* was.

"My brother's name is Jan. He came here about a month ago, and I heard that he had a great reception. Most of the town turned out to greet him, and some people even stayed up half the night to see him. But there's no one to meet me. I think it's a shame!"

"Well," remarked the policeman, "I think I know who you are now. Your brother did have a fair number of people to meet him. Not as many as I have seen on some occasions, but don't you trouble!"

"I am not troubling," said the other, "at least,

not about that. But I am every bit as important as he, and yet no one seems to bother about me or my luggage. I'll tell you who I am. My name's Feb Ru Ary. Ever heard of me before?''

''The name's familiar, but it sounds a bit foreign. You are not an alien, are you?''

''Rather not!'' replied the other angrily.

The policeman felt sorry for the lonely little fellow, so he said, ''If I were you, sir, I'd just wait about a bit. Perhaps somebody will turn up.''

While Feb. waited, he became more miserable and cross than ever. I have often found that the more we think about unpleasant things, the bigger they seem. Soon he was sulking so much that it became quite cloudy, and the more he thought of his grievances, the worse he felt, till a storm arose, and a chill wind with a nip of frost in it swept across the sky.

Two men who were passing on their way to work remarked, ''It's cloudy and cold! Well, you can't expect anything better from old February, can you?''

Do you know anyone with a February face? Ever look in the mirror when you feel cross? I know that when some people feel slighted, they brood over their wrongs, instead of making the best of things. So the clouds form, and the storm rises, and a chill frost blights everything, and the earth is sad. And it is just because like poor old Feb., they

F ret about what happens,
E nvy others who seem better off,
B light everyone's happiness by getting cross.

And so they get a February face. But if you want to be bright and happy, then

F orget the disagreeables,
E nter into all you do—lessons or play—gladly
B anish all bitter thoughts at once.

Then your face will be bright with the happiness within, and people will be glad to see you coming their way.

"For every day is a fresh beginning;
Every morn is the world made new."

VIII

THE SUNBEAM

"ISN'T it time we had a holiday?" asked the sunbeams one morning in their home high above the world. "We have been on duty long enough," said one, "and now that the flowers are over and the harvests in, I don't see why we should be always at it."

"Quite right!" chimed in the others. "We won't shine again till we feel like it. People don't think enough about what we do, so let them miss us awhile."

"I don't want to be disagreeable," said one little beam that had been standing apart, "but I think you are wrong. People do appreciate what we do. I know they are glad to see us, and if the flowers are over that is all the more reason why we should try to brighten up the world. No holiday for me!"

"All right," said the rest. "Off you go! We'll see who has the best time."

Like an airman making for earth, Sunbeam came swiftly travelling through clouds and smoke till he reached a grey and gloomy city. It was quite early, but the people who were going to the mills seemed glad to see him, and he thought one of them nodded in quite a friendly way.

"Now that I've come, what am I going to do with myself?" thought he. "I haven't got very long, and I want to do someone a good turn to-day."

As he looked about, he noticed that right opposite stood a number of houses that had once seen better days. The street was shabby and the people that passed looked poor.

"Wonder if there's anyone about here who wants cheering up?" He peered through a window, and there on a wretched bed lay a little fellow with such pale cheeks. Sunbeam saw that the room was bare and comfortless and he felt very sorry for the sick boy, so he hopped on the bed.

The little chap's face brightened up at once, and they had a fine game together, for the boy's wasted fingers were trying to get hold of Sunbeam, as though he wanted to keep the golden bar of light forever. And the beam danced and dodged till the boy laughed right out at his antics. No matter how swiftly the hand moved, the beam was always too clever and it escaped.

At last it was time for Sunbeam to say good-bye. You know, sunbeams can never stay very long in the same place. But it made the beam's heart glad to see the colour in the boy's thin cheeks, and to hear his merry laugh.

"Well, good-bye for the present," he said to the boy. And as he got out into the street, he said to himself, "That is a good beginning for my day. Now I wonder what's next?"

After a time, Sunbeam found himself before a lot of warehouses and offices. They looked as though they had never seen the sun, for they were

so dark and grey, but that was all the more reason why Sunbeam should spend a little time there if he could do any good. But could he? That was the question.

Looking through a keyhole, Sunbeam saw a man sitting at a desk and looking very unhappy. He was resting his head on his hand, and he said to himself, "Things seem to be going from bad to worse."

Something must have been troubling him. What it was I do not know, but that was enough for Sunbeam. With a bit of a wriggle, he found that he could get through the keyhole, and he mounted the desk, looking up into the man's face, and waiting for him to notice.

"I wish I could cheer him up," said Sunbeam. And just at that moment, the man opened his eyes, and leaping off his stool, he said, "What's the use of looking on the dark side like this? Why, I declare, the sun's shining. I must pull myself together and have another try!"

He started hurrying about his office, and got out his ledgers, while Sunbeam sat there enjoying the fun. Before he left, though you will hardly believe it, the man was humming a tune.

"Good turn No. 2," chuckled Sunbeam slipping out into the street. "Say, I'm having a great time to-day! I'm jolly glad I came. What's next, I wonder?"

While he was making up his mind which way to go, he heard some boys shouting, and there a dog came tearing along the street like mad. Its tongue was hanging out, while its tail was so far between its legs with fright that it was almost tripping

him. And these lads were chasing him with stones and shouting till he was scared out of his wits.

"What should be done?" Sunbeam suddenly thought of a plan. He hid round the corner where the dog had run, and just as the first boy came up, out flashed the beam into his eyes. He was dazzled. He stopped. The others stopped, too, to see what was the matter—and the dog had got away!

"Cheerio!" cried Sunbeam. "I never guessed there was so much fun in doing good turns for people. I wish I could stay here forever!"

That was impossible. It was getting late. People were now going home from work, and Sunbeam had to get back too. Yet as he danced along the pavement he noticed how the tired faces lighted up at the sight of him. And when he met his friends after sunset he said, "Well, what kind of a day have you all had? I've had the time of my life!"

IX

THE QUEER COMRADE

THERE was great excitement in the city. Groups of people were talking in the market-place, and while the beards of the talkers wagged, the eyes of the listeners opened wider and wider.

"But I know," said one man. "I saw the men with my own eyes. They were measuring and planning out there, and they told me that the king himself was coming to live here."

Now the king of that land had reigned long, but few had seen him, for he seldom left the capital. So the news that he was actually coming to live in this city made a great stir, and sure enough, before many weeks had passed, huge wagons of materials and thousands of masons, carpenters and labourers arrived.

The months went by. The walls began to appear, and after a long time, at last the palace stood complete. It was built of purest marble. Its columns were of costly stone, and the gates shone like gold, while the magnificent furniture that came, the rich carpets from India and Persia, the Arab chargers for the king, and the gold coach for his use, almost took the people's breath away.

One day, the word went round that the king had come. No one had seen him arrive, but a man whose brother knew another man who had a friend

at court said so, and of course, it was bound to be true. But while they were talking about it, a herald in gorgeous uniform rode into the square, and blowing a mighty blast on his bugle, he made a proclamation:

> "The King has come! Long live the King! Be it known unto you all that if any man has a cause to plead, if he has been wronged by any, or if he has charges to meet that he cannot pay, the coffers of the king are open, for his heart is tender towards his people! Long live the king!"

The herald rode on, but the crowd lingered discussing his words with eagerness.

"What does it mean? It can't be true," said they. "No king ever did that."

Some of them clustered about the palace railings to see if anyone went in, but not a single man took the king at his word, and all the time the sovereign sat, solitary and sad, in his new home.

It was soon after all this that a stranger appeared in the city. The workmen were still building houses for the courtiers, so the stranger got work as a labourer. He had to carry bricks and mortar up long ladders, and though it was hard work and the day was long, yet he kept at it, and because he was so cheery, everyone liked him immensely.

When the buildings were finished, the stranger got work in the kitchens of the barracks. The task he had there was anything but pleasant but he did not seem to mind, and often enough, when the soldiers of the king's bodyguard came off duty, they would sit and chat with the stranger while he

scoured the greasy pans. In fact, it was the soldiers who gave him his nickname, as soldiers do. When they saw him busy with his pots and pans, and heard him singing at his work, they called him "The Queer Comrade."

His work done for the day, there was nothing the stranger liked better than to play with the children. He would hoist the little ones on his back and be their horse or their camel, whichever they liked, and of course, while folk thought him very strange they could not help but admire his kind ways and his happy smile.

The poor travellers who stayed for a night or so in the shabby part of the town where the stranger lived, said he was "one of the best." You can guess why. He was very handy with his fingers, and he would help to mend their shoes or patch a torn garment, while if a homeless one were in trouble, the stranger was always the first to sympathise, for he was homeless too. But why? Who was he? That was the very question people were asking.

"I say, who are you?" asked a man one night, for he fancied that the stranger had once been better off.

The other only laughed and said, "Well, they call me 'The Queer Comrade'."

Time went on. The stranger disappeared as quietly as he came, and the gossips were now saying: "That stranger, 'The Queer Comrade,' is not a poor labourer after all! It is the king himself."

Because the people would not go to him with their troubles, feeling afraid of his royal state, he had come to them. His love was too great for

the palace walls to shut in, and so he had lived among them to show them how dear they were to his heart. So from that time forth, everyone learned to love and trust the king even though he was unlike any other monarch who had ever reigned.

Can you guess his name? Was it Christ?

X

THE FAIRIES IN THE FIRE

YOU have often seen the fairies in the fire? I thought so! But there was once a man who did not believe in them at all, nor in all the noble and beautiful things that are in the world if only we look for them.

He sat by the fire one night, feeling very tired and lonely. And as he looked into the glowing coals, some of the old stories his mother used to tell him about the strange elves in the fire came back to him.

"Ah, well!" he sighed; "that was a long time ago! There are no such things as fairies now!"

"Aren't there?" asked a merry little voice. And the jolliest fellow he had ever seen jumped right out of the fire.

He was all red. He had red hair, red cheeks, red hands, and a suit of the ruddiest hue. And standing between the poker and the tongs, he looked roguishly up into the man's face.

"You do look down," remarked the fairy after a moment or two.

"Of course! I had to, or I wouldn't have seen you."

"I didn't mean that," answered the little chap. "You look unhappy, kind of miserable. Seeing me hasn't done it, has it? I don't look sad."

"No," said the man, smiling in spite of himself. "I can't say you look sad. On the contrary, you look rather merry and—bright!"

"Splendid!" cried the fairy, clapping his hands with delight, "You have got it first time. That's my name!"

"Your name—what is? I don't even know what you are!"

"Why, Merrion Brite is my name—at your service! When you said just now that we didn't exist, I thought I would just come and show you that you are quite wrong. I am one of the fairies in the fire!"

"I shouldn't have believed it," said the man, looking very puzzled. "In fact, I do not believe it even now. Probably you are only a bit of fancy."

"Well, I am a bit fancy; at least, my suit is. Do you like it?"

"It's very grand. Your best suit, I suppose?"

"Oh no! These are my working clothes."

"But I didn't know that fairies did any work," said the man, getting quite interested.

"Don't they! My word, the fairies in the fire do."

"You surprise me. Won't you tell me something more about yourself and the kind of work you have to do?"

The fairy looked quite pleased as he settled himself on the top bar, and clearing his throat just like elderly gentlemen do, he began: "Well, it's not what you'd call an easy life. People always expect us to be bright and cheerful, and I think they sometimes put too much on us. . . ."

"I'm afraid I don't understand," interrupted the man. "How do they put too much on you?"

"It's like this. Once a fire is lighted, you know, we set to work and no sooner have we got it nice and ruddy, when someone will come in and put another shovelful of coal on, and say, 'Now do hurry and burn up! It's bitterly cold to-day.' So we have to start again on that black, sizzling coal, and change it from dark to bright, from cold to hot, till instead of being wrapped up in itself, it gives out its light and warmth to others. You know what coal is, don't you?"

The man nodded, so Merrion went on:

"It has sunshine and heat locked up in its heart you know. Well, we work on its feelings till it unlocks its treasures and lets the sunshine out. Of course, it may sulk a bit at first, and look very black about it, but we generally manage to warm things up.

"That isn't all. We arrange beautiful landscapes and splendid castles to please the children. No, of course, they cannot go to them, but you must have seen little folk sit on the rug after tea, before the lights are on, and admire our work? I have, many a time. We can hear them say, 'Look, there it is! A great palace! And see that bright gate? That is where the Fairy Queen has just gone in. Aren't those mountains fine?'

"I say! it's worth all the trouble we take just to see their bright faces, and to hear them laugh."

"Yes," said the man, "I should think it is. And I suppose there is quite a lot of you?"

"Rather! We are a mighty nation, and the world couldn't get on without us. Some of us

work on the great steamships, others drive the railway engines, and some are busy in all your factories, while there is quite a large number of us who live in houses like yours. Wherever we get a chance, we are always busy giving back comfort and cheer for all the black things people heap on us!"

"That is returning good for evil," mused the man.

Just then, there was a tiny spurt of flame. The fairy had disappeared. But as the man sat there he said to himself, "So that's how it is! The fairies take all the hard and gloomy things that come their way, and do their level best to make someone else happy. I like that. It only needs a bit of an effort when things are not to one's liking to make the best of them. I must try to be merry and bright!"

The fire crackled, and the man could have declared that he heard tiny hands clapping, and a little voice cry, "Bravo! just try it!"

XI

THE PIRATES

ONE dark night, the Angel that sees to things called on the wise man. But it was late. The man was fast asleep, so the Angel had to wake him.

"Dear me! What a start you gave me. What's the matter? Is the house on fire?" he asked sleepily.

"No," said the Angel, "the house is all right. It is something I want the children to know about, and they will listen to you for they love you well."

"But who are you?" he asked.

"Oh, I am only an angel," was the reply. "Come with me!"

The Angel took the man's hand, guiding him down a long narrow passage somewhere near the seashore, and soon they stood in a room that looked as though it had been cut out of the solid rock. And around a big table, lighted by candles stuck in bottles, sat the fiercest-looking lot of men the sage had ever seen.

Their faces were weather-beaten and grim, and each man wore a strange design on his breast that looked like two bones with something oval in the middle. And to make matters worse, their belts were full of knives and pistols.

It may have been the knives or possibly the

bones that reminded him of something, for the old man turned to the Angel and whispered, "If you don't mind, I think I'll just slip back home for a minute. I'm not sure if I gave my dog his supper."

"You cannot go now. You should have thought about that before. Don't you know where we are?"

The man, forgetting manners for a moment, shook his head.

"We are in the pirates' den!" the Angel answered.

That seemed to make the man more anxious than ever to see about his dog's supper. It surely couldn't be that he was afraid! But the Angel took his hand, and that reassured him, so he listened to what was going on.

The pirate chief was talking to his men, and when he laughed, all the shadows seemed to share in it till the whole cave was full of laughing voices.

"Now, my hearties! Let us hear what you have taken on this last cruise," he said, looking into the faces of his company. "Who's first?"

"Well, Cap'n," began one man, "we saw a trim little craft sailing along, so we boarded her, and a fine cargo she had."

The pirate chief smiled. "What was it?"

"Pearls, Cap'n, pearls! So we took them and sank the ship!"

"Good!" replied the chief—though of course, he meant it was very bad. "Now, No. 2, what have you to report?"

The man addressed told how he had taken a vessel laden with cases labelled, "Things-at-

tempted." The next said he had captured a cargo marked, "Things-as-they-are." While a fourth said, "Cap'n, mine's a queer capture. The ship I got was laden with Smiles and Kind Words; you'd better have a look at that lot in daylight!"

The pirate chief laughed again, this time so heartily that his yellow teeth made the wise man think that it was a pity he was not as careful as the girls and boys he knew, who cleaned theirs every day.

"You've done well," said the Captain. "You couldn't have done better if I'd been with you, but these rheumatics. . . ."

Just then the Angel led the old man out. "I have been thinking of that dog of yours. You had better get back; I can't bear to think of the poor animal being hungry."

But the man said, "Oh, he'll be all right for a few minutes more. The fact is, I felt just a little er—afraid of those men. But these ships—I never heard of cargoes like those. What did they mean?"

"That is just what I wanted to explain. We can talk it over as we walk back. Every boy and girl, and every grown-up too, for that matter, has ships at sea. You remember the first one, laden with pearls? Each hour is a pearl, and it meant that Time had been lost by somebody.

"Another pirate captured that splendid cargo of Things-attempted. Someone had given up trying to do the lessons that seemed hard. The third had a load of Things-as-they-are, meaning that somebody had parted with Truth. And the last had taken Smiles and Kind Words—you

can guess that means a lost temper somewhere!

"These are the most precious cargoes a ship can carry—Time, Trying, Truth, and Temper. And when a pirate captures these, it is a serious loss both to the owner and to the world."

"I think I understand," said the man, "but will the little folks?"

"Certainly, if you tell them that the pirate who captures time is Laziness; the one who steals Things-attempted is Carelessness; while the other two are Falsehood and Crossness. But if the ships had only run up their own flag when the pirates attacked—the flag of Resolve—they would have been safe. Now I think you had better hurry back; your dog will be ravenous!"

And so that he would be sure to remember, the wise man kept saying to himself:

Time is stolen by Laziness
Trying is stolen by Carelessness
Truth is stolen by Falsehood
Temper is stolen by Crossness.

XII

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

LUCIUS was a young soldier in the army of ancient Rome, and he was so handsome and brave that when he strode along the streets, people would turn to look a second time. This may have been because he was so splendidly clad, for his coat of mail, with the burnished breastplate and shining helmet with its nodding plume, gleamed like gold in the sunshine. But more probably it was because he walked with head erect and chest out, instead of lounging along like some children do, although father is always telling them to straighten up.

The officer, Claudian, who commanded Lucius's legion, was very proud of this fine soldier. He had noticed how obliging and obedient Lucius was, for he never needed telling twice to do a thing, and what is more, he did it with such a happy face that the officer promised to promote him.

About this time, the day came round when all the garrisons in different parts of the empire were rearranged. Legions were drafted from one place to another, and every soldier was eager to know just where he would be sent. And Lucius, with the promise of promotion in his mind, was full of hope that he would get a chance of showing

his devotion and courage. Where would his legion go? To Gaul? That was his dearest wish.

There was a great war raging in Gaul, and that was why Lucius thought he stood a chance of doing something heroic and great, but to his disappointment, when the lists were issued, he found that instead of being drafted there, or to some of the distant parts of the empire, his legion had been told off for garrison duty in Italy.

As he was returning to his quarters, feeling very depressed, whom should he meet but his officer, Claudian. The young soldier saluted, but the other stopped and said, with a smile:

"How fares it with thee? And why art thou so sad of face?"

"Well, sir," replied Lucius, "I have just seen the lists and I hoped we were thought brave enough to be sent to the wars."

"Yea, and so hoped I, for I am disappointed even as thou."

"But could we not appeal to the Senate, sir, and crave permission to go? I would like to show myself a man."

"No," replied Claudius. "What Cæsar wills must be obeyed. And where he sends us we must prove our loyalty and our courage."

There was nothing more to be said, and shortly afterwards, the legion found itself in the city of Herculaneum.

That very year—it was A.D. 79—there was a fearful eruption. The volcano suddenly belched forth its fiery lava, and the molten mass swept down upon the city. The alarm was given. Crowds of people fled for their lives along the

roads leading to the countryside, while others, stricken with fear, hid in their houses hoping they might be safe.

Lucius was on guard at one of the gates. It would be another three hours before he went off duty, and as he looked first at the flaming crater of the volcano and then at the people surging past him, he wondered what to do. The ground shook under his feet. Buildings were toppling in ruin about him. Should he flee like the rest, or stay there at his post?

Then he recalled swiftly how he had longed to show his devotion and bravery, and the words of his officer came back: "Where Cæsar sends us we must prove our loyalty and courage." He could still show the kind of man he was! And so, because he had been set to guard that gate, he remained true to his trust. He was faithful unto death!

Centuries have passed. But a few years ago, some very clever men were digging amid the ruins of that buried city. They had unearthed part of the walls, and in an archway, they discovered the remains of a Roman sentry. He was still at his post, and the price of his fidelity had been his life. You will remember that Christ said, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

It is the little duty done well, the unimportant service we are called to render, that test our courage and show our steadfastness, and just as this soldier proved his grit and devotion to his emperor in doing his duty faithfully, so in the life we live at home, at school, at play, can we honour Christ.

XIII

MOURNFUL MAX, THE MISER

THAT was not his real name, nor was it his only name, for sometimes, just for a change, people called him, Miserly Max, the mournful. But if there was anything in either name, he could not have been a very nice man to live with. However, that did not matter very much, for he lived alone, and his home was in a little old-fashioned town where everyone knew everyone else, and everything about each other's affairs.

They used to gossip about Max. Some said he was very rich, but miserly, while others asked how he could be rich when he was so miserable, for they thought that wealth and happiness would be sure to go hand in hand.

Now Max used to see the folk talking together as he passed by and he had a good idea that they were discussing him. For one thing, no one seemed to want anything to do with him. They would look the other way when they saw him coming, and if by any chance he overtook them going to market, they tried to avoid him.

This made him more mournful than ever and more miserly, and he would go back to his solitary house, soured and sad. He had thought once that he would have a dog or a cat just to keep him com-

pany, but animals need food, and food costs money—though that is no reason why you should forget to feed your rabbits, or give a few crumbs to the birds. So Max had to find another means of comforting himself. He turned to the only thing he loved. His gold? No, he hadn't any gold. It was too scarce to be his idol, so he had all his money changed into silver, so that it looked more.

Well, when he was quite sure the shutters were fast and the door bolted, Max would take out a bag of silver. He had several, though he never allowed himself to see them all at once. That might have made him feel happy, miser as he was, and he liked to be miserable because it is cheaper to be unhappy than to be glad; at least for anyone like him, it was easier. So he would open the bag, and carefully count the coins. Perhaps he hoped that they might have increased since he last looked at them, but when he discovered that there was a coin missing, then he would get very cross and unhappy, and wonder what had become of it. The only thing to do was to count through the whole lot again, and when he found he had made a mistake, he would be so happy that he would have to put the bag under the floor again, so that he might resume his miserable feeling.

"Now it's gone! It's out of sight. Just what it would be if anyone robbed me! Suppose they did——! Hello, what's that?"

It was raining heavily, and the wind was howling about the house, but this was another kind of noise. It was a tap, tap, tapping, at the window, and Max's knees smote together. "It's thieves," he moaned. "I knew they would come

sooner or later. Whatever shall I do?" Then it occurred to him that robbers would hardly tap at the window to attract attention. Then perhaps it was someone who wanted to borrow something! That was nearly as bad. Just then the knocking sounded on the door, and a child's voice seemed to be calling his name. He opened the door, and he could just discern the face of a little boy, drenched with the pelting rain.

"Please, Mr. Max, I'm so wet and tired. Will you let me come in for a bit? I'd lost my way till I saw your light. I won't ask for anything!"

The artful little fellow might have known that was sure to gain him admittance, for now that Max knew that it wasn't thieves, and that no one wanted to borrow anything, he was willing enough to let the boy shelter. Strange to say, he felt just a bit sorry for the boy, and taking off his wet clothes, Max wrapped him in a rug, and set him before the fire, while the storm grew worse and worse.

"I'd let you stay the night only your mother might think. . . ."

"Oh, she won't mind. She'll think I'm at Grannie's. I stay there sometimes, you know."

Max did not know, but he thought the wisest thing to do would be just to nod his head, and the boy chattered on. He told him all about his school, and how kind the old master who taught them was so that everyone loved him. "He lets us come to his house, if we like, and he tells us some fine tales. And do you know what he does? He dresses up. Yes, dresses up like a carrier, and when he hears about someone sick or too

poor to get the comforts he needs, he goes round to the house, when it's dark, and he'll say, 'A parcel for you, ma'am,' and although he will speak in the gruffest voice, the folk all know him, and they'll laugh and say, 'Why, if it isn't dear old Dominie.' Perhaps it's a parcel of clothes for a little child, or something nice for one of the old people. But, isn't he great, Mr. Max?"

This was quite a long speech for the boy, but Max had listened, and he said, "Does he seem to enjoy playing tricks like these?"

"Enjoy it! Rather! You should see his eyes twinkle when he tells the boys how much pleasure there is in doing a good turn for people."

When Max got the boy to sleep, it was very late, but he sat down thinking over what he had heard. "How happy this schoolmaster must be, and how people love him. Yet they call me mournful Max. He can't be as well-off as I am. I know he isn't! Well, I'll see into this to-morrow."

What had happened to Max? It was as though something had awakened in his heart, and when he sent the boy off next morning, after a really good breakfast, he gave him a small but heavy packet to give to his mother, while one of the bags of silver looked decidedly thinner than it had done the previous evening. Then Max set out for the schoolmaster's.

"Yes; I suppose there is something in it, but I don't like to think that anyone has been telling tales out of school," said the old Dominie in reply to Max's questions. "What makes me do it? Why, Max, you are not thinking of acting in that

way, are you? I always understood you were a mi——"

"Don't, please!" said Max, raising his hand. "I want to be different. Tell me your secret—why you take such pleasure in people."

The master led the way into his book-lined room, and pointing to a motto on the wall, he said, "There's the secret. I don't know who wrote those words, but they have meant a good deal to me."

Max put his spectacles on, and with difficulty spelled out:

J esus first
O thers next
Y ourself last

"That makes you kind; but what makes you so happy?" asked Max.

"That is there too! Don't you see that the first letters spell J O Y?" And as Max read the motto again, he saw that the Dominie was right. Mournful Max is now no more. He spends his life in helping other folk, and what do you think his name is now?

XIV

LADIES FIRST

THE boy's parents were sad. But the king's orders had to be obeyed, and so they sent their child away. It came to pass, however, that a princess fell in love with the boy, and taking him back to her palace, she made him a prince. There he had a splendid time. She gave him fine clothes to wear. He had servants to do his lightest bidding. And when he felt hungry, there were dainty dishes set before him that he might be satisfied. He must have been happy as the day was long!

That is just where we often make a mistake. It does not follow that if we lived in a palace and had everything that heart could wish, that we would be a bit happier than we could be now if we tried.

The years passed very pleasantly and swiftly for the prince, and he grew up. He was rather tired of the palace, and having the servants pampering him as though he were still a child, but something occurred that made him want to get away from it all.

One day he was out for a walk and there he came upon one of the king's officers, beating a poor fellow for something he had done, or perhaps had not done. He was one of the people to whom the prince really belonged, and unable to

restrain himself, the prince dashed up and knocked the man's tormentor to the ground.

This was a serious thing to do, for someone might report it to the king. But in any case, the prince felt that he could not live in idleness any more, so he got some peasant's clothes and stealing off from the palace, he made for a distant place in the country where he thought he might be able to get work.

It is not clothes that make a noble man, and although he did not now look like a prince, he remained one at heart. This will prove it.

As he got farther away from the city, the road got very dry and dusty, and being more accustomed to riding in a royal chariot than trudging afoot, the prince got very tired. Besides, the sun was beating down on his head, and he felt he could not go another step, so he sat by a wayside well.

While he was wondering how much farther he had to go, some shepherd girls came up with their flock, and while the sheep were baa-ing as hard as they could, the girls started to draw water from the well, filling the troughs for the sheep to drink. It was hard work and hot work too, but they did not mind so long as the sheep got the cool water.

That reminds me: have you given your canary fresh water to-day? And did you see that your cat had a nice drink of milk? You know that our dumb friends are dependent on us, and we must always think of them. And a few crumbs for the birds outside are always welcome.

However, just as the troughs were filled, up

came a group of men with another flock of sheep. "Good idea!" said the shepherds "No need to draw water to-day; they have done it for us. Here! drive those sheep back and let ours drink!"

They were starting to chase the frightened flock away when up sprang the young prince. His eyes were flashing and his hands were clenched. He pushed the rude fellows aside and said, "Ladies first!"—or something that meant the same thing.

The boys will agree that it was a princely thing for him to act like that. Then why don't you do it? It does not mean fighting—except against selfishness, but this is what it does mean: Do you offer your seat to a lady or stand aside to let one pass, or try to be of service in some way? It applies to mother and your sisters as well as to strangers.

You will remember that when the troopship *Birkenhead* was sinking the soldiers stood on deck as though on the parade-ground while the sailors put the women and children into the few boats they had. Their motto was, "Ladies first!" and we think with pride of those splendid men who thus showed true courage and real courtesy.

But the motto is for the girls as well as the boys. Their resolve must be "Ladies first!" That means they must be ladies before anything else—too polite to act thoughtlessly or speak crossly; too ladylike to be anything but gracious and kind.

Who was the prince? Why, you have guessed his name long ago. He was Moses, and the maidens were the daughters of Midian's priest.

XV

THE QUICKENING KISS

ONCE upon a time, in a quiet glade, lay a princess fast asleep. She was fair and lovely to look upon, and the courtiers round about her could not but admire her. But there was one thing they could not do: they could not wake her from her sleep.

"We cannot let her stay here," said one. "What will the king say?" But they looked the more puzzled, for this princess was like someone I know, who never wants to get up, no matter how often he is called.

"Let me try," the Lightning said. So he flashed his bright light in her face. She did not move. In fact, one would hardly have known that she was alive but for the rising and falling of her bosom.

"I think I can do it," remarked the Thunder, pushing to the front. "Now give me a chance." He growled his loudest. Then with a mighty whoop he returned to see if she was awake, for he was sure that no one could sleep through a noise like that. But to his astonishment, and indeed to that of the other courtiers, she did not stir.

The Wind cut in just here and said, "Let me see what I can do." So he whistled gently, as much like a blackbird as he could. Then he howled like

a creature in pain. "Well, we'll have to blow her up!" he said, and holding his breath for a moment, he then blew his hardest, but he was no more successful than the others.

The Hailstones took their turn. They pattered on the ground all round the princess; then, growing bolder, they even flicked her face with their sharp lash. But that did not wake her!

The courtiers had been looking on in wonder, but when they saw that nothing would wake their princess, they were alarmed. "Is there anything else we can do?" said one. "We cannot leave her like this. If she doesn't wake soon, she will die, and who dare face the king then!"

"Perhaps we ought to go for him," replied another, "but I have heard that sprinkling water on people who will not wake sometimes helps. Let us ask sister Rain."

The Rain came, and from her silver pitcher she shook tiny drops of water that fell like diamonds upon the sleeping maiden. And as they fell, she moved slightly in her sleep, and her lips opened in a fleeting smile.

"Splendid!" cried all the courtiers. "That is doing it! Keep on!"

But just then, the Prince of the Sunlit Land stepped through a rift in the clouds, and seeing the group of courtiers standing together he said, "What mean you standing idly here? There is much to do, and time is all too short for us all."

"May it please your highness," said one, "we are not idle. Our princess lies here in a deep sleep, and we fear the anger of our king if we leave her thus, but wake her we cannot!"

"Princess?" As the courtiers parted to make way, the prince saw the most beauteous maiden he had ever looked upon, for the smile that greeted the Rain's message had returned. "How fair she is. The like of her I have never seen before." And kneeling by her side, the prince pressed his lips to her brow.

How it came about, I cannot tell you, but at that instant the princess opened her eyes, and instead of being afraid at the sight of the strange prince, she smiled saying, "Oh, I have had such a strange dream. I seemed to see a bright light flashing, and heard awful voices round about me. Then someone threw sharp stones at me, and eerie sounds seemed to come out of the night till I was afraid for my life. But it was only a dream. I am so glad you woke me up!"

She held out her hand to the prince, and as he helped her to her feet she laughed gaily. "I am wide awake now! I do not know what you did to rouse me, but thank you very much! I must get back to the palace. My father will think I am lost, and I have so much to do."

The prince took her hand in farewell. Then he said, "I will come to the palace of your father, for I have something I want him to give to me. Can you guess what it is?"

The lady blushed and shook her head, but I think she knew what the prince meant. And so the whole party, courtiers as well, wended their way back to the king. And though the Prince of the Sunlit Land had succeeded where they had failed, they did not mind in the least, so long as

their happy smiling princess was awake once more.

You have guessed what the story means? The princess is the earth, locked in her winter sleep. The flashing lightning, the noisy thunder and the blustering wind, had failed to wake her just as the pattering hail, for gentleness is more powerful than roughness. But though the sweet rain had made her stir, it needed the warm kiss of the sun to bring her fully back to herself, radiantly fair.

Try what you can do for those about you. Scolding and crossness will not make anyone any better, but the warm kiss of kindness and thoughtfulness will work wonders.

XVI

THE HOLY GRAIL

THERE is an old legend that says that the cup from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper was brought by a pious man to Britain. Those who had the care of it were to be pure and good, but one man forgot his vows, and the result was, the cup vanished just as all our blessings do when we do what is wrong.

Now there was a young knight named Sir Launfal who resolved to go in search of this cup, and he vowed that he would not return until he had found it. So he called for his armour and his sword. He mounted his charger. The great drawbridge was lowered with many a creak and groan and he clattered out of his castle.

As he rode out, however, he thought he heard a voice. He looked about, and there, crouching by the castle gate was a poor leprous beggar, who held out his hand, and asked for alms.

The proud young knight was very angry that such a fellow should dare speak to him, but he took a gold piece from his purse, and flung it to the beggar. It lay where it fell, and the man looking up at the handsome face of the other said: "He gives nothing but worthless gold who gives from a sense of duty."

Sir Launfal rode on. Summer faded into autumn, and one year followed another, but no trace of the cup could he find. No one seemed to have heard of it. Of course, he had set out in a bad temper, and everything goes wrong then! Yet having vowed that he would never return without the cup, he kept on, ever seeking but never finding.

Many years had passed. The knight was no longer young, and he had parted with his horse, then with his armour in order to get food. And at last, weary of his quest, poor and homeless, he gave up and came back to find that people had long thought him dead, and another had taken his place. What should he do?

He sat down by the gate to think. Suddenly he heard a voice. It was the same voice that had called to him that day when he first rode forth so proudly. He remembered it well!

He looked about, and though it was getting dark, he espied not far away, the very beggar to whom he had flung the money, but now the poor fellow looked more pitiable than ever.

Possibly the knight remembered how Jesus had once healed a leper like this man, for he walked over to him and said,

"I behold in thee an image of Him that died on the tree," and taking out the last piece of coarse, brown bread he had left, he gave it to the beggar.

There was a wooden bowl lying on the ground, so Sir Launfal took it, and breaking the ice of the stream, he filled the bowl and held the water to the leper's parched lips.

It was then that the wonder took place. The bread changed from brown to white. The water in the bowl turned to red wine, and even the bowl itself became a glorious vessel of gold.

Nor was that all. Instead of a loathsome leper, there sat Christ, looking into Sir Launfal's face, and with a smile He said:

"The Holy Supper is kept indeed in whatso we share with another's need. Who gives himself with his alms feeds three: himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me."

The knight had ridden far and had wandered over the wide world to show his love to his Master, yet all the time, the chance of doing Him service and proving his devotion lay at his very door.

XVII

THE RIVER AND THE POOL

THE snow had been melting on the mountains, and two little streamlets were born both on the same spring day. They were quite near to each other, in fact, they were within speaking distance, and as they flowed down the mountain side, one noticed that the other was moving much faster than she.

"You seem in a hurry, little sister," she called out. "Where are you going?"

"I want to get down to the meadows where the daisies and the buttercups will soon be growing. I heard a bird say that they are always glad to see a stream, and down there, the lambs are frisking about, and everything is as happy as the day is long. That is why I am hurrying."

The other pouted. "You are very foolish," she said. "I heard what the bird told you, but I'm going to take things easily. It's nice and quiet up here, and you never know what may happen down in the valley. Grubby children may come and stand in you, or perhaps some cattle will come and drink you dry, then where will you be? I'm not running any risks. What is the use? Besides, there's plenty of time, and I'm going to think of myself while I can." And she did! But when

she saw that the other stream was still running along as fast as ever, she called, "Well, good-bye! You're very silly!"

The second stream knew that it was not a bit of use getting angry because the other was spiteful, so she said, "Good-bye!" And then she added to herself, "I'd rather be silly than selfish!"

On it went, gathering strength as it tumbled among the rocks. Now and again, when it came to a narrow place, it had the hardest work in the world to get through, but it twisted and turned till it managed to squeeze past, and as it went lower down, things began to get easier.

The birds were singing in the woods. The trees waved their arms and threw kisses to the little stream from the distant mountain. And in the meadows, the flowers turned their faces to it, while the lambs with their funny long legs, came romping along to look at the gurgling water. In one place, some cattle actually came in till they stood knee deep in the stream, and as they drank the cool water, they seemed to lift their heads to God and say, "Thank You for sending us the stream!"

This pleased the stream mightily, and as she got older, she got bigger and broader, just like boys do. She was a river now, and the fishing boats that had been tossing all night on the wild deep came in to rest upon her quiet bosom.

At last the Sea, which is the foster-mother of the rivers, stretched out her arms to receive her (You know that geography books speak of the arms of the sea!).

"Well, aren't you glad to get here?" she asked the river.

"Yes," replied the river. "Very glad, for everyone seemed so pleased to welcome me. The trees waved to me, and the lambs and the cattle actually came to have a good look at me. As I came along, I have been turning the water-wheel for the miller, and the boats came sailing in just before I got to you. I'd much rather be a river than a pool," she added. "It is such fun sharing what you have with others."

"But what has become of your sister?" asked the Sea. "I thought you would have made the journey together. You could have helped one another then."

The river was silent for awhile. Then she said, "We started together but she wanted to stay up in the mountains a bit longer."

Away up there, the other stream had found a cosy little hollow into which she crept. It was quiet and cool. There were no horrid rocks to climb over, but just nice soft earth, so feeling rather drowsy, she settled down and was soon fast asleep.

By and by, a green scum formed over her face, and when she did open her eyes for a minute, she felt so heavy that she just went off to sleep again. The water became stagnant and slimy so that the children who came out from the lonely farms among the hills would not go near it. In fact, had the pool not been quite so sleepy, she might have heard them say to one another, "Keep away from that pool! It's nasty. Let's go down to the stream; there's more fun there!"

And there was. The stream had heard their joyous laughter, and she would say to herself, "After all, it is better to give what one has and still have it, than to keep it and lose it! I would rather be silly than selfish, and it is much more pleasant being a stream than a pool. Look at the fun of sharing!"

XVIII

THE FINGER-POSTS

ONCE upon a time, there was a boy who had to set out on a journey, but he did not know the way. So he went to the wise man of the village and said, "Please can you tell me which road I have to take."

"It all depends where you are going," he replied.

"Oh," said Harry, "I have to go from Here to There, and I thought you might know the way. Grown-ups generally know best."

The wise man looked very pleased as he said, "You must take the first turn to the right, and keep straight on. Then look out for the finger-posts."

"Are there many?" he asked.

"No, only three. If you follow their direction, you will be well on your way, and by the third, you will meet the guide who is to take you the rest of the journey. Good-bye, and good luck!"

Harry set off in high glee. It was a glorious day, and as he tramped along, sure enough, he espied a finger-post standing at the cross-roads. But when he got to it, and read what was painted on the arm, he was disappointed. Instead of the name of the place he wanted, it had just one word, GO, and a long arm pointing along the highway.

Still, the wise man had told him to follow the

direction of each finger-post and he would reach his goal, so off he started again, only this time, he was whistling to keep his spirits up.

At the bottom of the hill, he came upon the second sign. This was stranger than the first, for it had also one word on it, but this time it was GROW, and the arm sloped upwards, pointing right up the steep track that wound up the face of the hill.

There was no whistling now! Harry wanted all his breath for climbing. But as he went slowly on, he thought to himself, "I've never heard of finger-posts like these. The old gentleman said I had to follow them, however, so I suppose it's all right. I'll see when I get to the third."

But he began to feel that he would never reach the third. Every step of the way seemed to be getting harder, and he was tired. At last, he thought he saw something sticking up on the crest of the hill, so he re-doubled his efforts and after some stiff scrambling, he stood panting before the third.

The others had been strange, but this was the strangest of the lot. In golden letters that shone in the light of the setting sun as though they were painted in liquid fire, Harry read the word, GLOW: and the arm pointed down the other side of the hill, where the track suddenly ended in a dense wood.

"Now where am I?" he said to himself. "There doesn't seem to be any road now. Why, of course, the man said I would meet the guide at the third finger-post. But where is he? No track, no guide! This is queerer than ever!"

As Harry stood for a moment, looking about for the guide, and wondering if they would meet before it got dark, he saw smoke curling above some trees. So off he set to see what it was. There was a tiny cottage, almost hidden from view, so the boy, who was feeling just a little out of temper, thought that perhaps if the guide were not there at least some one might be able to say where he was. So he knocked at the door.

It was opened by a lady with a kind face just like his mother's, and before he could get his question out, she said, "Well, little man, lost?"

"Nearly! But do you happen to know if there is a guide about here? I was told that I would meet him at the third finger-post."

"So you came that way, did you?" asked the lady. "I wonder if you can remember what was on them."

"Yes, I think so! The first one said GO, and the arm pointed straight along. Then the second said GROW, and it pointed upwards. While the third had GLOW on it, and pointed down here to the dark woods."

"Splendid!" cried the lady. "That's it! What a fine memory you have. To reach the golden land of There you must

"Go as God points you;
Grow as God bids you;
Glow where God puts you
Day by day!"

"But what about the guide?" Harry asked.

"He is here, waiting to lead you on. His name is Christ!"

XIX

THE TWO PLANTERS

LONG, long ago, there was a part of the world where the flowers had never begun to grow. The people did not know what was wanting to complete the scene, but as they looked over the long grassy slopes of the hills and the wide stretches of the plains, they wished that there were something just to brighten the landscape.

One day, a stranger appeared from no one knew where. He was dressed in clothes that looked as though they had been made from snow when the sun shines on it: they were so dazzlingly white. So while most of the people were looking wonderingly at their visitor, one, a bit bolder than the rest went up and said, "May we ask who you are, sir, and whence you came?"

The stranger smiled, saying, "I come from far. My home is in the land of Loveliness, and look! I have brought these from my king."

He brought his hand from behind his back and held out a gorgeous bunch of flowers. There were what we now call primroses, violets, daffodils, and quite a lot of others. "All these will I plant in your land, if you will let me, for without the flowers the earth looks sad."

The man spoke so kindly and was so polite in

his ways, that the people were quite eager for him to do as he wished. You see, everyone likes polite people; that is why mother is always telling you to be careful how you speak.

Some of them got spades and dug up the ground. Then the visitor set to work. He planted seeds and bulbs very carefully, setting some in straight lines; others in little clusters. Then smoothing the soil over them, he turned to those who were looking on, and said, "By and by I will return. Then we shall see the result of our work."

"Before you go," said one of the people, "won't you tell us your name? We are very grateful to you for taking so much trouble."

With a laugh he said, "Oh, it's no trouble. It is a real pleasure to me to do a little service for anyone. My name? Love-right! Good-bye." And he had gone.

He was hardly out of sight when another man, very much like the first to look at, came along. "I say!" he cried. "What a shabby old world. What you want is some flowers. Look here! if you like, I'll plant some for you. What do you say?"

The people looked at one another and the man who had spoken to the other visitor said, "We have already had one who has planted some."

"I know whom you mean," replied the other. "But you will have to wait a long time before you see anything for what he has done. But mine! Say, I'll put some seed in here that will be up in no time."

They listened. "What shall we do?" asked one.

"Well it does not seem quite fair to the first to let this man sow seeds as well," remarked one of the older men. "Besides, when once he has planted them, we cannot take them out again. Let us have nothing to do with him. I don't like his ways."

But some of the younger laughed. "Oh, it wouldn't be fair to give one a chance and not another. Let them both show us what they can do. Then, when their flowers come up, we can see which we like the best."

Well, the stranger set to work, but instead of digging up more land, he flung the seed with both hands right over the soft soil. And before long he had finished.

"There you are," he said, dusting his hands. "Before long you will have any amount of flowers and things. Now I must be off."

Time went on. The seeds were growing fast, and then the people saw that they should have been more careful about that second man and his promises. There were great ugly weeds pushing up everywhere: dandelions, stinging nettles, and all kinds of rank weeds were growing in the place where the other seeds were trying to make their way.

It looked as though the primroses, the violets, and the daffodils, would have no chance at all, and some said, "Why did we let that fellow plant his nasty seeds?"

The old man who had warned them was just going to say, "I told you so," when he remembered in time that was a little unkind, so he altered it to, "I wonder why we did!"

Yet in spite of all the weeds might do, they could not quite crowd the fair flowers out of sight, and the perfume of the timid little violets got through somehow. While taller and taller grew the sunflowers which were the emblem of Love-right, and these as they saw the sun kept their faces always turned to him so that they might reflect his smile.

One day, the people found Love-right standing beside his flowers, looking very sad.

"An enemy has done this," he said. "Do you know who has been planting all these weeds?"

"Why," was the reply, "the very day you were here, another man very like you came. He begged to be allowed to sow his seeds, so we let him. This is the result."

"You know his name?"

"No! he didn't give us his name."

"I know who it was. It was Work-spite. He always follows me and tries to spoil my work of bringing happiness to people. Now we must get rid of these weeds. What a pity I didn't warn you about letting anyone else sow seeds here."

While the stranger and the people set to work, I remembered how these two are always coming to the hearts of little people, seeking to sow their seed. Love-right is your better self. He brings seeds of love and unselfish deeds that will shine bright and fair, and send their fragrance far and wide. The other is the tempter who scatters seeds of rudeness, ill-temper, and unkind words in the heart.

"If ever old Work-spite comes here again," said some of the men, "we will tell him we want

no more of his weeds!" And Love-right laughed merrily as he said, "Yes, good seeds mean good deeds in the end. There's nothing that will make the old world so happy and bright."

XX

MARK, THE MERRY

SITTING in my study late one night, I was startled by a gentleman of somewhat unusual appearance. He stepped down from the book-shelves, and with a polite bow, stood in the light of the fire.

"Good evening!" he said, repeating the bow.

"Good evening!" I replied. "I think we have met before somewhere, but your name. . . ."

"My name is Chuzzlewit; Martin Chuzzlewit, at your service, sir."

"Why, of course. I remember you now quite well. In fact, I was just thinking of that young friend of yours when you came in. You know whom I mean. That young fellow who was so cheerful, so merry; and in these days. . . ."

"Oh! you mean my partner and benefactor, Mark Tapley, I suppose?"

"Exactly! Could you refresh my memory. You see, he was such a delightful fellow; one it was a real pleasure to know. And there are some young folk to whom I would like to introduce him."

Mr. Chuzzlewit blew his nose very violently, and clearing his throat he began: "Well, Mark was originally employed in a somewhat subordinate

position in a not much-frequented hostelry, and. . . ."

"Pardon me a moment! I am sure my little friends would never understand all that. I suppose we might say that Mark was a kind of handy-man in a small hotel?"

"Precisely! That is just what I said. Well, his one object in life was to be happy, whatever happened." And at this moment, Mr. Chuzzlewit laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. "Rather good, that? 'Happy whatever happened!' And I didn't intend to make a pun. As I was saying, because he found his work too easy, he wanted something to be happy about, and finding that I was going to America to try my fortunes there, he followed me to London. I was extremely poor and didn't know how I was going to pay my passage but what do you think he wanted? First he said he wanted to find work, to be man-servant to someone, and the poorer the better; the harder the life, the happier he would be. In short, he wanted to go with me. I tried to put him off, and said that I simply could not afford to take him. But he said, if I would not take him, he would go just the same. And being bent on being cheerful, he would take the craziest, leakiest, wretchedest ship he could find, and if he were lost at sea, then, said he, 'There'll be a drowned man at your door, always a-knocking double knocks too!' So I had to agree.

"Well, it was a good thing for me I did. We were in the steerage—the poorest and cheapest part of the ship, and I was so ill all the time, what with the rolling of the ship, and the crowded place

we had to occupy. But Mark! Why, bless me, that's just what he did every day. He was a blessing to everybody. He looked after me, and as for the children who were on board, why, he played with them, comforted them, helped to put them to bed. . . . But perhaps I weary you?"

"Not in the least; I am most interested. Please go on."

"Well, we arrived at a place called Eden, though why they called it that, I cannot understand. I had arranged to start business there, and we finished that part of the journey in a small steamer. When our baggage was put ashore, I thought we had reached the most dismal spot on earth. An old man pointed out the house I was to live in, but he told us that everybody was ill there. He was ill. His sons were ill. The last man who came had died; and I *did* feel happy."

"What about Mark?" I interrupted.

"I'm coming to him. He was just as cheerful as could be, and when we found the house hadn't any door, he just got out a blanket and nailed it up for one, and set about getting things unpacked, while I sat down and just cried like a child.

"Mark looked at me, and said, 'Don't do that, sir. Anything but that! It never helped man, woman, or child over the lowest fence yet, sir, and it never will.' He had got our things unpacked, and called out, 'Here we are, sir. Everything in its proper place. Here's the salt pork. Here's the biscuits. Here's the blankets. . . . Who says we haven't got a first-rate fit-out? I feel as if I was a cadet gone out to India, and my noble father was chairman of the Board of Direc-

tors. Supper's ready, a supper comprising all the delicacies in season. Here we are, sir, all complete. "For what we are going to receive," et cetera. . . . Why, bless you, sir, it's very like a gipsy party.'

"Some days later, we got things going, only I fell sick—Fever, I think. But Mark said, 'A touch of fever? I daresay, but bless you, that's nothing. Wait half a minute till I run up to one of our neighbours, and ask what's best to take for it; and to-morrow, you'll find yourself as strong as ever again. . . . I won't be gone a minute. Don't give in while I'm away, whatever you do!'

"I watched Mark as he left the door, and I heard him say to himself, 'Now, Mr. Tapley (giving himself a tremendous blow in the chest by way of reviver) just you attend to what I've got to say. Things are looking about as bad as they *can* look, young man. You'll not have such another opportunity of showing your jolly disposition, my fine fellow, as long as you live. And therefore, Tapley, now's your time to come out strong; or Never!' And Mark's cheerfulness pulled us through all our difficulties," said Mr. Chuzzlewit.

"Yes," I added, "but do you think my little friends will understand all this?"

"Sure! And when they are older, they will make Mark's acquaintance for themselves. Meantime, tell them from me—or from Mark—that the worst thing in life is getting sorry for yourself, and the best is being sorry for other people, and doing what you can to gladden their hearts. Keep smiling, even when it hurts!"

XXI

GROWING

IF you go about with your eyes open in the early Spring you will notice that something is happening every day. That sounds strange, but it is true. It is not everyone who goes about with his eyes open, for some people may stare at a thing, yet never see it.

But what is happening? Well, when the year first came in, it was quite dark by teatime, but now we can do without a light for a much longer time, so the days have been growing and getting longer.

Look at the parks and the gardens, and you will see the change there. Not very long ago, the trees looked as miserable as possible. They were bare and cold, so that when the chill winds blew, one could almost hear the trees say, "Please leave us alone! We are so cold, and we don't want to be tossed about any more."

All that is changed. The trees have got their Spring costumes, and very proud they are of their fine green clothes. And as though not to be outdone, the earth has decked her garments with the beautiful flowers.

Those flowers were funny! You know, first of all, they sent up a little shoot, just like a peri-

scope, as though to see what was going on on the surface. Then they kept on growing till at last the flowers opened their eyes, and smiled on the world. Trees and flowers have both been growing, all through the gloomy days.

Then some of you have been doing the same thing. You are bigger, broader, stronger, and kinder, than you were a year ago. That is fine!

Have you seen that picture of two little girls, standing back to back, while their sister who is bigger than either of them, is seeing which is the taller? She has put a ruler across their heads. But one child is about five inches shorter than the other, so she is standing on her toes. The big sister, however, has noticed this, and she says, "No tipty toes!"

She evidently thinks the tiny one is not quite fair, but I like that little child for wanting to be as big as her sister. She is making the best of her size and herself! And if there is one thing she wants more than another it is to be big!

Do you ever measure yourself? I used to know a little girl who was fond of being measured, and on her nursery wall, there were quite a number of marks. I do not mean finger-marks, though they *do* get on walls. But these marks were to show how big she was on the date which her father put opposite to each of them, and they could both see how much she had grown since she was last measured.

I want you to measure yourself, not back to back with one another, nor even against the wall, for there is more than one way of growing. We have minds as well as bodies, and souls as well as both.

Ask yourself, "How much have I grown?" "Am I taller than a year ago?" Good! That shows you have been going to bed willingly when mother said it was time, and that you have been playing well after school-hours.

"Am I wiser?" Better still! It proves that you have been trying to work as well as play, and that when your teacher asked you to learn something, you did not say to yourself, "Oh, bother!" but went and tried to do it.

"Am I better than I used to be? More thoughtful, obedient and kind?" That shows that you have been trying to follow the noble and true and that is best of all.

There are many things that help us to grow. Before the spring flowers came, while the days were yet gloomy and dark, someone went out to plant the bulbs. The ground was damp, and the hole into which they were put was cold and dark. They had been far more comfortable in the shop. Then the rain came and drenched the soil, but the little bulbs did not want to get up, and when the wind came and whistled, they just turned over again and went to sleep. But after awhile, the sun smiled on the earth and they felt they could not lie buried there any longer, so up they came, happy and gay.

It is much the same for us. We have chill winds of disappointment and showers that damp our spirits. We have to make our way through difficulties, just as the shoot has to come up through the soil. But the great Gardener knows what is best for us, and showers and sun are all meant to help us to grow.

To grow tall is good, to grow wise is better, but to grow like our Pattern is best of all. So before you go to sleep every night, measure yourself with Him, and ask, "How much have I grown to-day?"

XXII

CÆSAR'S COLLAR

KING EDWARD used to have a favourite terrier that went everywhere with his royal master, and on the dog's collar were the words, "I am Cæsar: I belong to the king."

That makes a fine motto for boys and girls, and there was once a boy who carried it in his heart. And it was like this:

The land where he lived was in danger. The king's soldiers were few though his foes were many, and when an invasion was threatened, the king sent his heralds through every town and village calling the men to the colours to help to save their homes.

Now Olaf heard one of these heralds, and when he saw the long line of men waiting to be enrolled, he took his place with them in the queue outside the recruiting office. Some of them began to laugh good humouredly at the boy, and one said, "You run home to your mother, little lad, and wait till you grow. You are no use!"

But the boy took it all in good part. He kept both his temper and his place in the line, and waited his chance with the rest.

They say that all things come to him who waits, and at last, Olaf's turn came. He stood before a

table at which a stern old general sat with some other officers, taking names.

"Well, my boy," said the general, "what do you want?"

"Please, sir, the king wants men, and I've come."

The scarred old warrior did not laugh as the men outside had done, but there was just a twinkle in his eye as he said, "Good! Now I want you to answer a few questions. You know a soldier must always obey orders. Are you always obedient?"

Olaf remembered that sometimes he had not done just what mother had asked or what his father had told him, and as his cheeks began to burn he replied, "I'm afraid I'm not, sir; at least, not always."

There was silence for a minute while the general's pen scratched, and then he looked up and said, "A soldier must be unselfish. His duty must come first, and he may have even to die for someone else. Are you unselfish?"

Olaf began to feel more uncomfortable than ever. He had never thought that being a soldier of the king meant all this.

But the officer did not seem to notice, and he went on, "Then he must be truthful, brave and pure, never shirking the difficult or the disagreeable. . . . Why, what's the matter?"

The boy's eyes were filled with tears.

"My lad, although you cannot say Yes to my questions, I believe you wish you could. Look! I will put your name down on this roll of the king's men. But he does not want them all at the

front; some are to stay at home, though he wants every man for his service. Home is your place. And every time you are tempted to be disobedient, selfish or untrue, I want you to pull yourself up and say, 'I cannot do that; I belong to the king!' That will keep you loyal to your sovereign, and it will help you to be valiant and true."

XXIII

THE QUEST OF THE SILVER KEY

DO you know who the Incas are? They are not children who do their homework carelessly —though sometimes *they* are, though it is spelt differently. The Incas were Indians who once lived in Peru, and had vast silver mines.

Well, Jack had been reading about them one evening, and he was just closing the book when a strangely dressed Indian stepped out and said,

"At last, O great white master, I have found you."

Now Jack liked the way the man spoke, for everyone likes politeness, so he replied,

"Have you been searching long? I have always lived here."

"Yea, many moons, white master," said the other. "And now, if you will but bring a sack of silver—which can be had for the seeking, then the silver key can be bought. This will open the doors of the kingdom, and it shall be your own. Then you shall reign over us as our chief. Seek and you shall find, and the kingdom shall be yours."

With that the Indian disappeared. Jack thought a minute. There was a sack in the woodshed, so he went off, and he took with him an axe

lest he should meet any foes, though what he expected to meet in his quest for the silver, I cannot tell you. The moon was shining, so that it was bright as day, and Jack trudged off manfully, to see where he could fill his sack. He had not gone more than a hundred miles or so when he saw at his feet a great basin of molten metal, shimmering and glimmering in the moonlight. There was no path down to it, but he crossed a field, clambered over some rocks and stooped down to fill the sack. But to his disgust, he found that it was what you have guessed, though what he had never thought possible: it was water—only water on which the moon was shining.

He was a little disappointed, but he got back to the white road and tramped on in quest of the treasure. "Seek and you shall find, and the kingdom shall be yours." The words of the Indian buzzed in the boy's brain. Before long, he espied a clump of trees with gleaming silver leaves.

"Now," he thought, "shall I climb up or cut the tree down first? Why, of course I have the axe. What a good thing I brought it."

So he cut away at the trunk and soon with a mighty crash, the tree came down. But when the boy went with his sack to fill it, he saw it was a silver birch, and the leaves were only grey. On he went again. And joy! there in front of him was a hill of silver, the summit shining like the armour of a knight. He started to run towards it, saying to himself:

"Why, I shall be able to fill as many sacks as I like now. The Indian was right: Seek and you shall find, and the kingdom shall be yours."

It was harder work climbing the hill than he thought, but at last—and it is wonderful how many hard things we can do if only we take a step at a time and plod on—he was near the top and at the point where the silver began. But to his horror, he found that it was not silver at all, only frozen snow. The moon had played him another trick! He flung down the sack. He threw away his axe. He resolved that he would waste no more time on such an errand, but would go back to bed before he caught cold. However, wonderful to tell, as he was on his way home, he met an angel—at least, he looked like an angel, for his raiment was white and glistening.

"Well, my man," said he, "and where are you going?"

Jack was very pleased to hear him say "my man," instead of "little boy," and so he told the angel all about his quest for the silver key.

"Ah," said the angel at length. "What a good thing we met. Why, I have the very thing you are looking for."

"No?" said Jack, thinking he must be dreaming.

"Yes!" replied the other. And putting his hand in the folds of his cloak, he drew out a package. Carefully unwrapping the cloth in which it was wound, the angel came at last to a book, and in the middle of the book was a slender silver key, engraved with the words, "Love to God."

"This is the key you were seeking, and it will open the kingdom for you," said the angel with a smile.

"But where is the door, now I have the key?" asked the boy.

The angel pointing to the open book read aloud, "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Jack followed the angel's hand as he stretched it forth, and there stood the door. It was marked LIFE, and as he slipped the key into the lock, the door swung open on the most beautiful palace the boy had ever seen. There were other doors leading from the entrance hall, and treasure-chests filled each apartment.

The angel smiled again as Jack looked wonderingly about him eagerly reading the gold plates that showed the contents of each: Joy, Contentment, Courage, Honour, Happiness. These were only a few of them, and to his delight, Jack found that his key opened every lock.

"Say, that old Indian knew something, when he sent me on this quest, didn't he?" cried the lad. "Seek and you shall find, and the kingdom shall be yours."

"Yes," replied the angel, "he was right, and love to God is the key that will open every precious thing to you that the world contains."

XXIV

GOD'S GARDEN

THERE was once upon a time a king who was greatly beloved by his people, and nothing pleased him more than to receive from them some tokens of their love. And because they knew he was very fond of flowers, although the royal gardens were ablaze with colour all summer, they often sent to the palace baskets of choice blooms they had grown themselves. This made the king's heart glad. It shows what a lot of pleasure a little kindness can give to others.

Baskets and bunches came every day. Some of them had nicely-written messages with them for the king to read. But for all that, the king was not altogether satisfied, for he sometimes wondered if the people really meant the kind things they said. He resolved to find out. "If they are genuinely true-hearted towards me," he said to himself, "then they will be the same to everyone. Kind words ought to mean a kind heart."

Without a word to anyone, the king laid aside his crown and sceptre. He put on a long grey cloak that covered him from head to foot. Then he got a wide-brimmed hat that came well over his face, and with a pair of dark spectacles on, he made sure that no one would know him. So he set off on his journey.

The road was dusty, and soon the king got dusty too, so that he looked just like a pilgrim. "Now is the time to try my plan," he thought with a smile. So he stopped at a house and said, "I am tired and thirsty, and have come from far. Could you kindly give a pilgrim a bowl of milk?"

The woman, thinking it was some poor wanderer, scowled as she said, "Oh no! There's a spring farther on. You can get some water there, and sit down while you drink it, if you are tired." And she slammed the door.

That might be good enough for a pilgrim, but the king could not help wishing she had not sent him those flowers with the loving message of the day before.

He went on to another house, and there he asked for a morsel of bread. But the man told him there was a baker's shop in the village where he could buy as much bread as he wanted, for said he, "We can't give bread to idle fellows. Begone!" And again the door was shut in his face.

The king went on, very unhappy now, and rather sorry he had come, for he was disappointed. Suddenly he stopped. "I'm wrong," he said. "They don't mean to be unkind. Perhaps they are too poor to give food away. I'll try another plan." So at the next house, which had a pretty garden at the side, he said, "Could you spare a few flowers for a lonely pilgrim? They would make the road seem easier." But the man made some excuse about them being wanted for the market. So the king tried another house, and another, always seeing that it was a house with a garden, but at the last one, the woman said, "Do

you think we've nothing else to do but grow flowers to give away? We have to work. If you want flowers, grow them or buy them!" And her husband nodded saying, "Quite right!"

They saw him sad, and tears up-filled his eyes. Then as he raised his hand to dry those drops, back fell the cloak of sombre grey and lo! a robe of royal purple lay beneath. It was no stranger-pilgrim, but the king. And he had asked in vain!

If Christ the King came to your soul's garden would you have any flowers to offer Him? Ask mother the kind He likes best besides thoughtfulness, thankfulness, gentleness, and love.

XXV

THE AWAKENING OF ARISTOBULUS

THERE were two great things about Aristobulus. One was his name, which is a big one, and the other was his opinion of himself, which was bigger still. But though he felt very important, that did not make him better-liked by the townsfolk. When he went out, he would strut along like a peacock, and if a poor man happened to cross his path, Aristobulus would say scornfully, "Out of my way, dog!"

No wonder people crossed the street when they saw him coming. Even the dogs of the blind men would try to tug their masters out of reach of the proud man's tongue. And the wise used to wag their heads and say, Pride goeth before a fall!

One day this came true, though no one seemed to know just how it happened. Somebody had thrown a banana skin on the pavement (it could not have been a girl, for girls are too thoughtful; and no boy would do anything so stupid and dangerous). However, Aristobulus must have slipped on it in some way, and he hurt his leg so badly that he found he could not get up.

He was mad with pain and he roared for help. But then people were so used to seeing Aristobulus in a temper and to hearing him shout, that they took no notice, and there he lay. Fortunate-

ly, however, after some time, a man in a shabby coat who was coming along on the other side saw him, took pity on the proud Aristobulus, and went over.

"Have you hurt yourself, sir?"

"Of course I have! Think I'm amusing myself lying here?" he growled. "Help me up! Go on! Don't stand there gaping at me as though I were an animal in the Zoo."

The peasant tried first of all to bind up the injured limb, and all the time, Aristobulus was moaning with pain or else blaming the poor fellow for his clumsiness.

"How shall I get you home?" he asked at length. "You ought not to try to walk, even if you could."

"And I couldn't even if I ought," replied the other. "Go and call a carriage for me, and for goodness' sake, do hurry up about it. Think I want to stay here on these hard flags all day?"

There was only one place in the town where carriages could be hired so the peasant ran off as hard as he could. But the owner was a very cautious man. "Where do you want to go?" he asked. "And who is going to pay me? You don't look as though you could afford to ride."

That was not a very kind thing to say, but the peasant very patiently explained that it was not for himself, but for Aristobulus who would certainly pay.

"What! for him? He called me a dog yesterday. Not much! Let him walk home," said the man, and no carriage would he send.

What was to be done? The peasant was strong,

but he did not think he could carry Aristobulus home, even if he would let him. So after turning it over in his mind, he managed to borrow a wheelbarrow, and he trundled the rich merchant home in that!

The doctor set the broken thigh, though Aristobulus was fuming and storming all the time. But the doctor took no notice of his rudeness, and having done all he could for him, he settled his patient for the night.

Sleep was impossible. But as he tossed in pain, two things kept coming back to mind and Aristobulus could not get rid of them. One was the kindness of both the peasant and the doctor; the other was the thought that he had been extremely rude to them and very ungrateful for all they had tried to do for him. So first thing next morning, he sent his servant to find the peasant who had been such a friend in need.

Now the peasant was on his way to ask how Aristobulus was, so the servant ushered him into his master's presence.

The sick man looked up, and beckoning the other to approach he said, "I did not thank you for helping me yesterday. Tell me why you were so kind."

The peasant shuffled from one foot to another, and turned his hat about in his hands. Then at last he said, "The Book, sire, the Book."

"What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"It says, 'Love your enemies. . . .' "

"But I'm not your enemy, my man. I have not seen you before. And yet . . . and yet your face seems familiar. What is your name?"

"Karl Saviska, sire."

A cloud passed over the face of the merchant. Then he said, "You are not the Saviska whose farm was sold last year for rent?"

The man nodded, looking very uncomfortable, and fell to studying the pattern of the costly carpet.

"And you knew I turned you out? Yet you came to my assistance! Karl, you've been a true friend to me, and you've taught me a lesson. I shall be proud and selfish no more. I will try to make amends to you." And he was as good as his word. Something in Aristobulus had awakened!

XXVI

THE BEAR'S TAIL

THIS is a tale about a bear's tail, but if you have been to the Zoo, you must have noticed that the funniest thing about a bear is—that he hasn't one. Now the lion, the kangaroo, even the monkey. . . . But the poor bear looks quite bare, just as though he had lost something. Has he? Did he have a tail once? The story says he had, and like all real stories it begins "Once upon a time."

Once upon a time there was a bear roaming about, looking very miserable. Perhaps he was cross too—I have heard of people being as cross as a bear. The truth was that like all bears, he was very fond of honey—like boys are—and girls. And the other bears being fond of it too there was not a bit to be found. Just then a bird that had been soaring over the hills on a message for the Prince of the Fairies, spied him. So she came wheeling down and stopped just by the bear.

"Morning, Ben," said she. (I didn't tell you that his name was Ben Bruin).

The bear growled something. He might have been a boy.

"You don't look very sweet this morning. Why, you are just like some of the mortals I have met. First thing in the morning they. . . ."

"I don't feel very sweet," interrupted the bear. "If you had been hunting round for a little honey like I have for days and days, what would you feel like?"

The bird just whistled to herself for a minute.

"Honey, did you say? I never touch it. But what a good thing we met. I think I can put you in the way of some, though I cannot put it in your way. See? But you will have to climb for it!"

So she told him that flying over the hill, she noticed a lot of bees round a cleft in the white rock.

"And," she added, quite wisely, "where there are bees you may find honey. Not that I know much about them," she added. "Bees are too fond of leaving a sting behind them, like people with nasty tempers. Well, what do you say?"

"I think I'll have a try," replied the bear. "Good-bye, I'm off."

Now Ben Bruin was rather proud of the fact that he could walk upright like men do, but he found that it was no use trying to get up the hill like that. In fact, the bird was right. He would have to climb for it. So he set to work with might and main—that means on all fours, hands and knees. And I find that we can always climb best like that: working with our hands, but sometimes going down on our knees to pray.

But try as he would, he did not get on at all well. He was rather short of breath and the hill was steep. And as sure as he sat down to rest he slid down too! By mid-day he was only half-way to the rock. But as he held on to a young sapling, he saw something shining on his paw. He

looked again. Then he looked at his other paws. Yes, on each paw he saw something he had forgotten. He had hooks on them—claws! So he put them all out and he found that by digging them into the ground he could get up ever so much better. And when he saw a fallen tree right across one of the steepest bits of the hill, he walked up this without any trouble.

At last he got to the white rock, but the cleft was high up and he would still have to climb. He tried, and he tried, and he tried again. Then he discovered that by putting out all his hooks, he could pull himself up from one ledge to another. And there, sure enough, was the biggest store of honey he had ever seen. Some bees were there too and they did not like him coming. But Bruin did not mind, and filling his arms with honeycomb, he made off.

He was careful to get some distance from the rock before he even tasted the honey. But at last when he thought he was safe, he sat down. He had, however, forgotten the lessons he ought to have learned on the way up, for he did more than sit down. He slid down! Yes! he slipped and slipped, just as though he were on a toboggan. How he kept his balance or how he kept the honey I can't tell. And, didn't he shout with pain? The other bears heard the noise and they all came to watch. And when he reached the foot of the hill, some of them helped him up.

"Why, Ben Bruin," said one, "where's your tail?"

Ben looked. "I must have lost it on the way; but look, boys, I've got the honey. It was worth

the climb. There's plenty more. I like to share a good thing when I can."

So the rest of the bears went off too. Whether they did the same as Ben Bruin and came down the same way or not, I do not know. But it is true that, to this day, bears have no tails except those that people tell about them.

This is true too. To get the honey we have to climb! That means we must strive hard to be unselfish, pure and true. But there is something else worth knowing, that just as the Bible says about Israel, "He made him to suck honey out of the rocks," so God makes it possible for you and me to get sweetness out of the hard things, if we do them for His sake. Fancy that: we must learn our arithmetic, geography and grammar, so that we may be able to work better for Him when we grow up. We must do the little duties of each day for His sake. And then we shall find sweetness in hard things. The wise man who tried to serve God in this way found that obeying God's word made the commandments "Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." And as Ben Bruin found we too shall prove that to climb is worth while.

XXVII

ARE YOUR FEET SHOD?

THERE was a gentleman staying in a London hotel, and on his way down to breakfast one morning, he met one of the porters who said, "Good morning, sir!"

That was not very unusual, but the gentleman noticed that the porter was looking at him in a very curious manner. So all the rest of the way downstairs, he wondered what it meant, and looked at himself in a long mirror he passed, thinking that he must have forgotten his collar or something.

He could not see anything wrong, but that is not surprising. We can seldom see our own faults though other people's are quite plainly seen.

While he was at breakfast, one of the waiters asked him, "Have you got your boots, sir?"

"Yes; I have them on. Look here, what's the matter with everyone this morning? It isn't the 1st of April, is it?"

But the other simply smiled and said nothing.

After breakfast, this gentleman went into the hall, and then he understood. There was another gentleman, looking very angry. His face was red with rage. And what do you think was the matter?

He had one boot on, and he was holding another

in his hand, so that he had to stand on one foot, or if he tried to walk, he was going with one foot up and the other down!

"Look here!" he cried. "What am I to do? It is not much use telling me that someone else has got my other boot. I can't go out like this! I can't get this one on!"

And everyone was trying to look sorry and not smile, though he did look so comical; while the hotel servants were scurrying to and fro, trying to find the man with the other boot.

That reminds us of something Paul once wrote to his friends. He said, "Having your feet shod. . . . " Why shod?

Looks count for something. The gentleman felt he could not go out with only one boot on. And you will remember when the poor Prodigal came home, one of the first things his father said was, "Put a ring on his hand and some shoes on his feet!" He wanted him to look like a gentleman.

Then comfort counts for something. You have never had to walk along hard roads or cold pavements without your shoes. (What you do on the seashore at holiday time is not the same thing.) We saw two ragged little boys sitting in a shop doorway. One of them, in crossing the street, had trodden on a piece of glass, and cut his bare foot rather badly. But the other was a real chum. He tore a bit of the lining out of his jacket, and bound up the other's foot so that he could get home. But the old gentleman in the hotel was not going to risk anything like that. He wanted to be properly shod.

While looks and comfort are important, fitness is more important still. That was why such attention was paid to the boots our soldiers had. If they were worn or uncomfortable, the men could not march properly, and the Roman soldiers had nails in their sandals so that they could march without slipping on the great roads. Fitness meant everything. And the way the feet were shod helped the men to do their best.

That applies to more than the men. In some of our great camps overseas, we saw them sometimes shoeing the Army mules. When a mule did not want his shoes on, then the fun began. Ropes had to be fastened to his legs; he would be pulled to the ground, and then several men would hold on to the ropes, without hurting him, until his shoes were nailed on. He did not know it, but we do: he could not be fit for the work he had to do unless he were properly shod.

Have you got your shoes on? I mean the kind that Paul spoke about. Are you ready to do what the King commands?

If we are too busy with our play or too intent on our games when mother wants us to run an errand for her, our feet are not shod. If we are too tired or too cross to help another by doing a little kindness, our sandals of service are missing.

But if we are always eager to be helpful and kind, ready to do anything in our power to lighten another's load or go on an errand of mercy, always willing and obliging, then those about us—our parents, our teachers at school, our master when we go out into the world—will say, "There is a boy, there is a girl, whose feet are shod!"

XXVIII

THE FAIRY QUEEN

"FAIRIES! There aren't any such things," said Roy decisively. And as he was nearly ten and had just gone into the next form at school, his wisdom was beyond question.

"But I know there are," retorted little Ruth.

"Have you ever seen one?" asked her brother.

"N-o! but . . . but I *know* there are plenty. On moonlight nights, they dance right under this very tree, and Mummy is such a dear that I guess she's a fairy growed up."

"Well," said Roy, his hands deep in his trousers pockets, "I'd just like to see one, that's all!"

"Honour bright! Would you?" piped a tiny voice. And right in front of the children sat a quaint dwarf with the most comical face you have ever seen.

"Rather!" answered the boy, trying to look as though it would take more than a dwarf to surprise him.

With that, the tiny fellow leapt to his feet, and pulling up two or three pieces of turf from the lawn, he beckoned the children to follow him, down a long, sloping track that seemed to lead right under the garden.

"Don't be afraid," said the dwarf. "It isn't dark." And it wasn't, for the glow-worms on each side made the track quite bright. "We are going to see the Fairy Queen!"

After a time, they came to a great golden gate, and their guide gave the bell such a mighty tug that it went jangling and tangling all through the palace.

The porter, who knew the dwarf quite well, admitted them, and then they were taken into an ante-room to await audience with the Queen. She had gone out into the world, explained the dwarf, to see that her servants were carrying out her instructions, and so they might have to wait for some time till she returned.

"What do her servants do in the big world?" said the dwarf, repeating Ruth's question. "Oh, Queen Kindheart—the Queen of the Fairies, you know—sends her courtiers to cheer and help people who are in any kind of trouble, and though they are quite invisible, these servants of hers are always busy obeying her commands."

Just then a fanfare of trumpets announced that the Queen had come back, and in a short time, the children, with their strange guide, were ushered into the royal presence.

She was such a dainty little figure, seated there on her throne of ivory and gold, and although Roy and his sister felt a bit shy at first, she soon set them at their ease. (Ruth explained afterwards that she had a smile just like mother's, and so mother must really be a fairy "growed up!"). Before they quite knew how it came about, they had told her all about the brown and

white rabbits in the garden, and the funny tricks their terrier knew.

"Now," said the Queen at length, "would you like a drive in my chariot before you go back?"

"Ra—yes, please, your majesty," said Roy. "We'd think it topping!"

The golden chariot with two white horses was brought, and away they all went, the horses galloping up the sloping road that led to daylight. A wave of the Queen's sceptre, and they were quite invisible. "And now I can show you what we fairies do without anyone seeing us."

Trudging along the road in front of them was an old man with a big bundle of firewood on his back. He was very frail, and the bundle seemed far too heavy for him. But some boys were running behind, calling out rude names, and one was throwing mud at the poor fellow.

The Queen spoke to one of the boys, and he suddenly cried to the others, "I say! Let's play the game! We'll go and help the old man with his load." And they did.

There was a little boy, crying as though his heart would break. The Queen descended from the chariot, and whispered something in his ear; suddenly the tiny fellow rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, and though that did not improve his looks, he started to smile again.

Everywhere they went, with a wave of her sceptre or a gentle word, Queen Kindheart made cross faces look happy, and sad faces glad again. And all too quickly, it seemed to the children, they were back at the palace gates once more.

"Well, Roy. You believe in fairies now, I suppose?" asked the Queen with a smile.

Roy looked very sheepish. Who could have told the Queen what he had said to Ruth? He did not know, but he just managed to stammer, "Oh, yes, your majesty! Quite!"

"Then before you leave, I want to enroll you both in my service. Kneel!"

Ruth and Roy knelt side by side upon the steps of the throne. And as the Queen laid her hand on each curly head, she said, "Remember, you are now in the service of Queen Kindheart. Every chance you get of doing a good turn for someone in need, you are showing your loyalty and love to me and to—a greater One who is your King!"

XXIX

MYRA OF THE MAGIC TOUCH

MYRA'S father was a minister. They had come from a small country place with sweet little cottages, to a big factory town where tall chimneys belched forth black smoke, and where the hum of machinery filled the air all day long. The little girl had never seen such a place before. The shops and the busy streets were wonderful. But the thing that impressed her most was the number of mites, barefooted and poor, that she saw wandering about as though no one cared for them.

She felt so sorry for these children that one day she had actually gone to the cupboard where her shoes were, and counted how many pairs she had, to see if there were enough to go round. But there was not one shoe each!

So behind her smiling face, there were often thoughts that were too sad for a child, and this Monday afternoon, she felt sadder than ever. Lessons were over, and creeping up to the study, she coiled herself in her father's big armchair, thinking of what he had told the people the day before about the poor folk he had been to see. How much they needed sympathy and help!

While she was wondering what she could do,

and feeling how tiny she was, her eyes filled with tears. Then through the tears she saw a marvellous sight.

In the church, where the pulpit had stood, was a great shining throne, where an Angel sat, one clad in a robe that glistened like snow in the sunlight. Surging up to the throne, there was a vast throng of girls and boys. She knew by the sunny smile Who occupied the seat of honour, but it was some time before Myra could quite see what was happening in the front. But as she got nearer, she saw the Angel was giving something to each child who knelt before him. Some received tiny lamps that they were to carry to the dark places of life, that the gloom might be dispelled. Others were given a song with which to cheer the hearts of weary wayfarers. What would she get? Myra felt herself growing more excited every moment she got nearer, and when at last she too reached the steps of the throne, the angel said, "What shall I give thee, Myra, my child, for thy heart is tender?"

"Just what it shall please thee to give," she replied.

She held out her hand, but instead of putting anything in it, he laid one hand on hers, and placing the other on her brow, said, "Then I give thee the magic touch."

Myra did not understand a bit what that meant, and all the way home she was wondering what it could be. She was thinking so hard that she scarcely noticed the barefooted little chap in front, until she heard his sobs.

"Whatever is the matter, little man?"

He lifted his face to hers, and Myra saw that the tears had made two white channels down his grimy cheeks. "I've slipped, and scraped my leg on those railings," he whimpered, "And oh! it does hurt!"

"Let us sit on these steps. Don't cry! We'll see what we can do." And with her handkerchief, and the ribbon she wore as a sash, Myra began to render first-aid. "Say if I hurt you."

The tears had stopped, and the boy said, "You're not hurting a bit! Why, it feels better already."

Was it the magic touch? I cannot say. But as she went along, the streets seemed full of sunshine. Everyone who saw her bright smile felt happier. Sour looks vanished, and the care-lines were smoothed out from tired faces. One or two people who knew her, stopped to shake hands with the minister's little girl. And she said to herself, "Why, I know what it is—it's the magic touch!"

Would you like it? It can be had for the asking, for the magic touch is Sympathy.

XXX

SHARP AS A NEEDLE

"WANTED, a sharp boy, to make himself useful." That was an advertisement I read in the paper, and it made me think. One had often seen it put, "A smart boy," but who wants a sharp one?

There are sharp people who do what is not quite right, and sharp people who say what hurts. But surely no one could want a boy who would do either. Then it came to me: why, they wanted a boy as sharp as a needle!

That is the first thing about a needle. When you were first trying to sew, you found how even the small point of a needle could hurt if you put it in the wrong place. That is the kind of sharpness that some people have. They are all point and they wound others as well as themselves. But used rightly, the sharpness of the needle is a fine thing. The point is made sharp so that it can get through things, and get through them without much pushing. That is what we must remember about lessons or our work.

Then the needle has an eye. So have some little people, and they use it only to see faults in their playmates or to see reasons why they should not try to do right. But the needle uses its

eye better than that. Do you know what its eye is for? Of course you do. It is to take in something that it can carry along with it.

That was the kind of boy that was wanted—one who would remember what he was told, one who would take in what he was taught and carry it along with him. And that is why you have lessons to learn, that you may be useful in the work of the world.

Another thing about the needle is this: it must be straight. There are one or two like the surgeon's needle or the packing-needle that are meant to be bent, but most needles must be quite straight. You cannot do fine work with a crooked needle, and you cannot do much with a person who is not straight, that is, one who will not play the game and do what he knows to be right.

It is very difficult to make a needle perfectly straight, but it is one of the first things they do when they are making them. After being heated a number of pieces of steel wire are rolled backwards and forwards in a machine, and pressed against one another. And it is so with us. It is in our work and our play, while we have most to do with one another, that we learn to do what is fair and true, for no one likes to play with a child who will not be straight, and noble boys and girls know that to be upright and unselfish, to do right even when it is hard, are the qualities we admire most.

The needle must be bright as well. A rusty one will stick in the cloth, and make the work very unpleasant, and brightness in girls and boys is more than polish—though good manners and

politeness are always necessary. This brightness is getting through one's work, but doing it cheerfully and willingly, so that it makes work a pleasure. Sulks or grumbles are like rust on the needle.

That was the kind of boy they wanted in the city. And that is the kind everyone likes, one as sharp as a needle.

A point to get through things,
An eye to carry with us what is useful,
Straightness so that we do the right,
Brightness that will help us to do our
work cheerfully, smoothly, gladly.

These are some things the needle has, and like it, we must always be true as steel!

XXXI

THE MISSION OF THE MIGNONETTE

IN a gorgeous garden bloomed a lovely rose. There were other roses, but none like this one, for it was exceedingly vain and always making the other flowers unhappy with its foolish airs.

No one likes flowers or even children who have too good an opinion of themselves, and that was just what was the matter with this rose. She would fluff out her petals, and when the breezes blew, she would nod her head in a stately manner as though she were almost too great to listen to the messages they brought.

Perhaps what made things worse was this: the old gardener seemed to pay very great attention to this rose. He would see that she was well supported and that no ugly insects were troubling her by crawling round. So some of the young flowers got jealous. Then they started to sulk.

"What is the use of growing at all?" complained little Polly Anthus. "He never looks at us!"

"I feel the same," said the Mignonette, which made the Dahlia look round in surprise, for she was generally so sweet.

"Don't fret, little flowers," he said. "You know, we all have our place to fill, and we have

to be just ourselves. The gardener thinks something about us, and so does master, or we wouldn't be here at all!"

But the flowers did fret. And this made the proud rose more pleased with herself than ever, for she knew that they were jealous of her.

"Poor little things," she would say, "Did they do it to them, then?" And she would toss her head in her haughty way, adding, "Why don't you hurry up and grow? Then you might be noticed."

So you can see that she was rude as well as vain.

One night, something had evidently vexed the wind, for he came into the garden in a raging temper. He stormed and he raved, and went tearing up and down just like people who forget themselves and fly into a tantrum. So the little flowers were glad for once that they were so tiny. They nestled down in their beds, hoping that the wind would not notice them, and it was not until morning that they dared open their eyes.

He had gone! Everything was still except for the thrush in the orchard who was whistling a merry tune to himself, so the flowers lifted their heads and looked about.

Something else had gone!

They looked round the garden, but the proud rose was nowhere to be seen. Her place was empty. But on the ground just where she had stood was a number of red petals.

Whether it was she who had vexed the wind or not, we cannot tell, but she had been blown

up! And the tiny flowers were glad they had been spared her fate.

There are some advantages in being small. It is not always the grown-ups who are happiest, and it is not only big people who can do good in the world. That is what the Mignonette discovered!

When the gardener came past where the Mignonette was growing, she noticed that he looked very troubled. Of course, she at once thought it was because his precious rose had gone, but when she saw him push his spectacles up on his forehead so that he could read a letter, and heard him say, "Poor little chap!" she knew she was wrong. It could not be the rose.

Suddenly he stooped down, and laying hold of a clump of Mignonette, he cut the stems and before she had time to cry out, he bore her off to the tool-shed. He got a box, laid her inside with a few big leaves and put on the lid.

Lying there in the dark, the Mignonette felt very unhappy. She was sorry she had ever grumbled about the quiet home in the garden, and before long, she was more sorry still. She was taken off somewhere, and the box was tossed and tumbled till now she was on her head and now on her side, and she hardly knew what would happen next.

But like most unpleasant things, the end of her troubles came. She heard the chink of scissors, the lid was lifted, and it was light again.

She was in such a strange place. There was a long room with rows and rows of beds, and a lady with a white apron and such a sweet smile carried

the flowers to a little boy who was lying very still in one of the cots.

His eyes were closed, but the nurse said, "Look, here's something for you."

He must have thought it was medicine, for he pretended to be asleep.

Then she said, "Smell!" And of course, that sounded like medicine too, so he still kept quiet.

But when she said, "Here's a box for you," he looked up quickly, for every boy likes to get a parcel of some kind, and reading the note that said, "With love from Uncle," he took the Mignonette and held her so tightly in his little hot fingers that she could scarcely breathe.

She felt faint and hung her head, so the nurse told the boy that if he would just let her have them for a few minutes, she would put the flowers in water, and he should have them quite close to his bed so that he could smell their perfume.

They were put on his locker, and as the flowers saw the look of pleasure in the sick boy's face, and knew that he had forgotten his pain, it was worth all the tossing in the post to be able to give such pleasure.

"Better to die here," said Mignonette to herself, "than to live selfishly in the dear old garden and perhaps be blown to pieces like that rose."

She was right. The rose had lived simply for herself and she was gone, but the Mignonette was living for that sick little fellow in the hospital. And do you know, there was not a patient in the whole of that ward who was not the happier for the scent of those wee flowers.

When we give our best to cheer someone else,

we are fulfilling our mission as the Mignonette did. The sweetness of a kind deed is carried far beyond our own lives, and its fragrance lasts long after the flowers are dead.

XXXII

THE TWO DOGS

THEIR names were Pyrame and Pierrot. They were both French, and while one was black and white, the other was white and black. Generally, they were good friends. It was only when Pierrot wanted his brother's bone that they did not get on well together, for, as you know, greediness always means trouble.

It was a good thing that this did not often happen, for they both had to work hard, and when there is a quarrel, it makes one feel that one cannot do one's best.

What? You did not know that dogs have to work? In France some of them do. They are harnessed to little carts, and they take round the milk or vegetables, just as their masters require.

When the great war broke out, André, master's son, had to go. He belonged to the Machine Gun Corps, and he had to take Pierrot, who was to draw one of the ammunition carts.

The two dogs had heard their masters talking, though they could not understand all they said, but just before André left, he called Pyrame aside and said,

"Well, old boy! I have to leave you for a time, and Pierrot is going too. I want you to stay be-

hind and help the old père with the milk-round. He can't do without you, so you must be brave and work hard till I get back."

Pyrame looked up into his master's face, but he could not say anything, for a lump had come in his throat at the thought of being left behind. So he just wagged his tail very slowly as much as to say, "I quite understand, but don't you think it is rather hard on me to stay behind?"

Months passed. The work was very tiring for one dog when there had been two instead of one, and many a time Pyrame wished that he could have gone off to the army instead of being left at home. But when he felt he was getting sorry for himself, he would recall what his young master had said about being brave, and he would tug at the little cart with all his might, as though he loved pulling it better than anything else in the world—though he didn't!

One day, the dog knew that something was going on. The old master was hobbling about the house as though he could not keep still. He would go to the window and look down the road. Then he would take off his spectacles and rub them very carefully as though he could not see through them. Then he would open the door and have another look.

Pyrame was wondering if his master were ill, when he heard wheels crunching on the road, and the voice that he loved! So he rushed out. There was young master getting out of a farmer's cart. He had his arm in a sling. But who do you think was with him? Why, Pierrot!

Pierrot was wounded too. He had one leg

bandaged, and he could only limp into the house. But Pyrame noticed that he kept his chest out, just like a soldier's dog would do.

It was some time before the two dogs could get a quiet time together, but at last, when the men were sitting before the fire, the wounded dog told his story.

"You see, Pyrame," he began, giving a lick first to his wounded paw, "while you have been having a good time at home, we have been doing something!"

That was hardly a kind thing to say, and Pyrame felt it, for he had been doing more than his share of work. But then, Pierrot did not know as you do that one should be careful not to hurt people's feelings by saying thoughtless things.

"Young master and I were sent up to the front, and one day the enemy was firing on a village we were holding. They were very anxious to drive us out, but our orders were to hold it at all costs.

"But it was hard work, and our officer saw that we must get help. How was he going to get a message through? The enemy had cut the wires, or, at any rate, they were not working, so master said I would go.

"I was rather glad, not that I was afraid to stay there, although the noise was dreadful. So they fastened a message to my collar, sent me back to the general for more men, and told me to hurry them up as fast as I could. And I did. But when I got back, master was shot in the arm, and while I was looking at him, I was hit in the leg,

so here we are, and we have leave for a few weeks."

While Pierrot was finishing his story, there was a knock at the door and both dogs were barking their loudest, for it was the post-lady and she always got a welcome. And then young master came with a letter in his hand, and patting Pierrot on the head, he exclaimed, "Splendid, old fellow! You are to have the decoration for bravery! Good boy!"

Pierrot put out his chest still more and wagged his tail as much as to say, "Well, of course!" And poor old Pyrame wagged his tail too, for he was proud of his brother, but he felt very, very sad inside! If only he could have been with the army instead of tugging a milk-cart! He might have won the medal that the French army gives to brave dogs.

His master must have read his thoughts, for he took the faithful dog's head in his hands and said, "Good old Pyrame! You did not have a chance like Pierrot, but I think you are just as brave. While he was helping his country, you were helping old master, and I know pulling that cart on the hot streets is hard work! Doing your duty, no matter what it is or where it is, shows the kind of stuff you are! You are a hero too!" And Pyrame's heart jumped and his tail wagged harder than ever. So if one dog was pleased with himself, the other was pleased that his master loved him, and I know which dog was the braver.

XXXIII

THE POPPIES IN THE CORN

A PATCH of poppies was growing in a cornfield, and a very pretty picture it made. But unhappily things were not as nice as they looked. The poppies had a fit of the sulks, and that spoils everything.

It happened this way. The flowers opened their eyes one morning, just after they first got their lovely new dresses. These were of rich red material, and they made the poppies feel very proud indeed.

To their great annoyance, however, they found a lot of green corn growing round them, and because the corn was taller than the poppies, it could not help looking down on them, though not in the way they thought. Many people are like that. They imagine things and so make themselves miserable and others too!

"I declare," remarked one poppy, shaking out the folds of her crimson skirt, "what a place to live in! There's positively no room to breathe with these horrid cornstalks crowding round. I wish they wouldn't stare so!"

"Yes," added her sister. "And how important they try to seem, lifting their heads so high and looking down on us as though they were far su-

perior. If they were well-dressed like we are, they might have reason to be proud. I shall certainly lodge a complaint!"

Just then, the hedge who had been listening to the flowers thought he would join in. "Not so fast, my pretty poppies! If you knew a little more, you would say less. Don't you think you are a bit hasty in speaking in that unkind way? I am a good deal older than you, and having lived here all my life, I have seen quite a lot of your family at different times. Yes, and a good many harvests.

"The corn you despise will not always be green. By and by it will turn to gold, and that is what the farmer is waiting for. When he comes round here, it is not to admire you, beautiful as you look in your fine clothes! He hardly gives you a thought! He comes to see the corn changing from green to gold under the kisses of the warm sun."

The flowers hung their heads, but the hedge was only just getting under way, and he went on:

"When the corn is ripe, what do you think happens? It is carefully reaped, carted off to the miller, and he grinds it up till the whiteness of its heart is seen. Then it is made into bread, and that makes the world go round. Its clothes may not be as gay as yours, but what of that?

"Take a lesson from the children. When they see anyone not very well-off or not as well-dressed, they don't complain because they have to live in the same world with them. Not they! Instead, they are glad that God has given them such kind mothers and fathers who provide nice

clothes to wear and let them have a good time. And because of the blessings they enjoy, they are always on the look-out for someone to whom they can do a good turn.

"So you see, my pretty poppies, beauty is not a thing of clothes. It is something in the heart, shining in the face and sounding in the voice. But there, I'm getting quite a preacher, and you did not know any better, did you?"

The flowers were sorry they had been so silly, and they promised the old hedge that they would never despise anyone again, no matter how shabby or plain their clothes might be, but instead, they would try to gladden some other heart every day. And so, they lived happily ever after.

XXXIV

CAMOUFLAGE

ONE day in France, I met a soldier friend walking with a paint-bucket and a brush in his hand, so I asked him what he was going to do.

"You didn't know that I was a bit of an artist, did you? I'm just off to do a bit of camelflash." (That was his way of saying the big word at the head of this page.)

Of course, you know what the word means. You may have seen ships painted with strange streaks or buildings all decked out with queer patches of paint in all kinds of shapes, as though someone had been trying to mend holes in their clothes and had done it very badly.

The reason that these patches are painted as I have described is so that, in time of war, the enemy airmen or others who are on the look-out with field-glasses, may not be able to see things just as they are.

The big guns were screened with nets, covered with leaves or pieces of green cloth, so that from the air they looked like the land round about. But while you know all this, do you know who taught us to do these things? We learned it from Nature herself.

In winter, the earth puts on camouflage till you

might think that the flowers and the trees would never be seen again, but she is only pretending to be dead.

There are some butterflies so like the brown leaves of autumn, and they keep so still, that if a bird should happen to be near them, they look just like leaves and nothing more, and the bird never sees them.

Some fish rest on the beds of streams, and when they do so, they can change the colour of their backs just to the shade of the river-bed, while other fish called Perch, that live generally in rivers with a lot of reeds and rushes, are marked with dark stripes, like the reeds.

The tiger's stripes are for a similar reason. He lives in the wild jungle amid the canes and tall grass, and so those dark stripes on his coat make him so that he can scarcely be seen, while the Polar Bear is always white because his home is among the icefields and the icebergs. This is how Nature takes care of her children.

Some animals can camouflage themselves even more wonderfully. The Scotch Hare is brown in summer, but when the snow is on the ground his coat turns white. And the Ptarmigan, a bird that also lives in Scotland, has white feathers in winter, but in the summer and autumn it is as brown as the grouse.

But which is the most wonderful of all the animals in this? Surely the chameleon, for it can change its colour in the most marvellous way. Some soldiers in the East found a chameleon one day, and remembering what they had heard at school about him, they thought they would see

what he could do. He was on the sand, and his colour was quite yellow, so they laid him on an army blanket and he went a dark brown. "Good!" they said. "Now get some of those leaves, and put them round him."

That made the chameleon decide that green was his favourite colour, and it was only when one of them wanted to put him on a Tartan plaid with its many colours that the game stopped. What would have happened then, I wonder!

Now all this shows us something worth remembering. We grow like the people we admire most, so we should choose good companions, always sail under our true colours, and never be ashamed of doing right.

The right use of Camouflage helps us to serve our King in this way too. We can cover what might be a sulky face with a smile, and instead of speaking the word that might sting, we can keep it back and speak a kind one that will help. Then the nasty feeling will vanish, and we shall be happy again.

XXXV

THE HELPERS

IT happened that in my dreams I went to the place where men and women, and girls and boys, get their life-work. It was a beautiful building, with wide marble steps, high columns, and carved oak doors, and it was called the Temple of Life.

They took me to the office where a lot of people were waiting their turn, for this was where the tasks were given out. Some of the people had come back for more work. They were mothers and fathers who had been busy toiling for their children for years, and some were there for the first time. These were the girls and boys, and I was very interested in what they would get.

Who do you think was attending to them all? It was an old gentleman with a long white beard, and flowing locks. No, not Santa Claus, but it may have been his brother, for they were certainly very much alike.

He was talking to a man who had evidently been there pretty often, and I liked the kindly smile with which he said to the man, "Yes, of course you enjoy your work, the more heart you put into it! Everyone tells me that!"

"True," said the man, "but, Father Time, I do wish you wouldn't hurry us along quite so

fast!" At which, the old man laughed till the rafters rang.

So this was Father Time! I had never seen him before, and I had not noticed the hour-glass by his side. But I had always thought he was a surly fellow, and instead, he was one of the jolliest, kindest-looking old gentlemen I have ever seen.

On the people passed, young and old. And Father Time was handing them rolls of parchment, with the seal of the King attached. These were their orders, and as they read them, they knew just what their Lord required them to do.

As there was no chance of a word with the old man just then, I went outside, where some of the folk were talking about their orders. One man was saying, "I hoped for something quite different, but I have to go back to the same work I have been doing for years." While a lady who had been busy tending the wounded, was now going back to her work at home.

Then I saw two children, and as I love girls and boys, I went up to them to see what they had to do, for they both looked rather disappointed.

"What have I got?" the boy said to his sister. "I've got the miserables! Here, I wanted to be a sailor and go off looking for a treasure island, and Father Time has given me a lot of geography to learn, and a whole lot of sums. And I just hate sums! What have you got?"

"Oh, he's given me a lot of needlework to do, and a lot of horrid spelling to learn. I detest sewing, and as for these silly old words— And I wanted to be a hospital nurse! It isn't fair!"

"Hear, hear!" said someone. And a most untidy little fellow came pushing up to the children. "I agree! Say, let's be friends."

"But who are you?" asked the boy.

"What the little girl said: 'Tisn't Fair—that's my name. I don't hold with lessons and all that. Seems to me that we oughtn't to have to do things we don't like. And that's just what C. B. says too!"

"Who is C. B.?" questioned the girl, for up to this she had not been able to get in a word.

"Who's C. B.? Why, don't you know him? He's my cousin, Mr. Dunn. Can't B. Dunn—that's his full name. Old Father Time doesn't care for us. Says we will never do any good in this world. But then, what's the use of worrying? We please ourselves, and that's something. If you'd like to stay and live with us, I think you——"

"Excuse me," said another little fellow, raising his cap very politely, "but I have been sent by Father Time to see if I can be of any service to you. Please do not have anything to do with that boy. He is always making mischief, and he does more to hinder people with their work than you would believe. But, I'm sorry, I haven't told you who I am. My name is Timothy—Timothy Try, at your service."

"We are very glad you came," chimed in the little girl. "We were both feeling rather discouraged, and in fact, I felt like giving my work back to Father Time and telling him I couldn't do it."

"Ah!" said Timothy. "That is just how that

fellow makes people feel. It is a good thing you did not meet his cousin—Can't B. Dunn."

"But we heard about him," cried the boy. "I should think those two are the worst discouragers there ever were!"

"That is why we are here. Dear me, I didn't tell you about Percy."

"Percy who?" asked the children, both at once.

"Why, my brother-helper, Percy Verance."

"Say," the boy broke in, "he isn't a foreigner, is he? It sounds a queer name."

"Foreigner? Not he. He's loyal to the backbone. We both are. If you are in any kind of difficulty, all you have to do is to clap your hands three times, like they do in the Arabian Nights, and we will be there to help—one at each elbow!"

"Timothy Try and Percy Verance!" the children cried, and they laughed so gleefully that I woke up.

Who could they be? Then I remembered that when good old Father Time sets us a task, no matter how hard it is Try and Perseverance are two helpers who have never been known to fail.

XXXVI

THE QUARRELSOME GIANTS

MAPS are useful in many ways, and if you look at one of Ireland, it may help you to understand this story better. On the east coast, you will find a cape marked Howth Head. It is near to Dublin. And ages and ages ago, so an Irishman told me, a giant lived on this very headland.

He was a monstrous fellow (the giant, I mean), and not as good-tempered as you are, for he had a silly way of getting cross for scarcely nothing at all.

Now on Bray Head, 14 miles farther south, stood the castle of another giant, and although the distance seems so great to us, it was not much to these mighty men. The result was, not only could they see one another quite well, but one could actually hear the spiteful things his rival on the other headland might be saying.

That was rather a pity. We can often avoid a quarrel when we won't hear the unkind words that other children sometimes use, and at any rate, it always takes two to make a quarrel.

Well, these two giants were always snarling and quarrelling. One day, the Dublin giant was more tantalising than usual, and he said, quite loudly, so that the other could hear, that Bray

was the right place for a giant who could do it so well!

At that, the giant of Bray picked up a huge piece of rock, bigger than your house, and he hurled it at his foe, 14 miles away. But he was not nearly as strong as he thought, for instead of hitting the other giant, the rock fell in the sea, mid-way between the two headlands. And there it made an island, called Dalkey Island, which you can also find on your map.

The Dublin giant was greatly amused at his rival's temper, and he shouted, "You are a funny fellow! When the children hear about us, they will think we are the silliest giants in history! Temper doesn't show strength! It only makes us do things we can't undo!"

"What do you mean?" asked the other giant, still a bit angry.

"Why, you've left that rock there for people to see how we used to behave, and perhaps some ship will run on it in the dark and be wrecked."

"I never thought of that," replied Bray. So he strode into the sea, meaning to carry the rock back to the land again. But the water had made it so slippery that he could not get hold of it properly.

Now the other giant had come to see what was going on, and he had a try. Then they both tried, but it was no use. And there the rock remains to this day!

Well, seeing that they could not move it, the giants stood for a minute wondering what to do. Then Dublin said to the other, "Leave it! Let us shake hands and be friends! That rock will re-

mind us that we ought to use our strength not to harm one another, but to help someone from this time on!"

So the other said, "Righto!" And the compact was made.

Do good with all your heart and might;
Do good, be good, from morn till night,
Let voice be kind and face be bright;
Do good, be good! That's all!

XXXVII

THE PATHFINDER

THERE is a picture that you may have seen. It is of a boy, who is standing in a room, and he is somewhat strangely dressed. He has a wide-brimmed hat, just like a rancher from the Wild West, a khaki shirt and short breeches, while from his belt hangs a large knife.

You have guessed what he is? Right! first time. He is a boy-scout.

He has a map in front of him, and he has been busy tracing out the track for his troop, for he is the pathfinder. That is why the artist has given his picture that title.

But while busy looking out the way for others to take, a thought has occurred to him. He needs a guide to show him the way through life if he is to be a true man and to prove a help to others. And there by the boy's side, the Guide appears.

He is clad in a long, white robe. He holds a staff in his hand, and the sandals show that he is ready for the road. So he has laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and he is saying in the scout's ears, "I will show thee the path of life! . . . I am the way!"

The look on the lad's face plainly shows that

not only has he heard, but he has resolved to follow this Leader as long as life lasts.

That boy is like a brave man who had to pass through all kinds of dangerous places, and who travelled to strange cities on service for his king. He always had to depend upon the Pathfinder, and that man, whose name was Paul, never found Him to fail.

There was another who went through the jungles and swamps of Central Africa, who even penetrated where no other white man had ever been, for he was doing the same kind of work as Paul. And David Livingstone knew how the Guide was always going before him to open up his way.

So you will do great things in the world and for your fellow-men. You will bring a smile to sad faces, and sunshine to many a shadowed soul. And what is more, if you follow the Pathfinder you will at last reach the City of the Great King.

XXXVIII

OUR DAILY BREAD

RONALD came down two stairs at a time, and as soon as he reached the table, he called out, "What's for brek, Mummie? I'm awfully hungry!"

Mother smiled as she said, "You mean *very,* don't you?" She was always smiling except when she was very tired, and even then, the smile got through a bit. "There's miracle for breakfast, for one thing!"

The boy looked puzzled, but he guessed that his mother must have something good when she talked like that. He asked, "What is it?"

She held up a ———. No! I must not tell you yet.

"But I don't call that a miracle," said Ronald. "Why, it's only——"

"Why that 'only'? Do you remember that day when people were so hungry; and Jesus took a few loaves and blessed them; then fed all those people? That was a miracle. Don't you think it is a bigger miracle to feed all the people in the world? Yes, and especially when some of them are boys like you with such appetites!"

"I never thought of that," replied Ronald. "It is rather wonderful when you think of it."

"It is," mother said, "and it is even more wonderful when you think of this:

> "'Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
> Back of the flour, the mill;
> Back of the mill is the wheat and shower,
> And the sun, and the Father's will.'"

"Say! Did you make that up, Mummie?"

"Oh, no!" she replied, "but it's true."

Ronald was now so busy with his breakfast that he could not talk much, for his mouth was full, and of course, we never talk then. So his mother had it all to herself for she could see that the boy was interested.

"The grain comes from all over the world—Canada, America, Australia, Russia— And where else, father?" But father was busy behind his newspaper.

"Men we have never seen, sow the seed after having ploughed and prepared the ground. Then while men rest, God takes a turn. The sun, the showers, the soil, the dew are all God's servants, and they help. Then it is the men's turn again, and the reaping time comes. The railway men lend a hand, and our sailors bring it along the great ocean ways to our ports.

"The miller is ready to do his part. The grain is taken up into the mill, where it is carried along swift-moving belts. It passes over powerful magnets that take out any pieces of metal or nails that may have got among the grain. The washing comes next, so that all the bits of soil and gravel that made a home for the grain while it was growing are carried away. And then it goes

through one machine after another till the rough covering is taken off the grain, and the pure white flour is seen.

"While we are fast asleep, the bakers are busy making that white flour into nice brown, crusty loaves. And when we cut them up into slices and eat them, the cornfield becomes brain and muscle and life to us all. What do you think of that? Isn't bread a miracle?"

And Ronald, busy though he was with the miracle, replied, "I should just think it is! I've never thought of that before!"

There are many of us just like that boy. We have never thought of it, or if we have thought where our bread comes from, we never get past the baker's shop. We must look beyond the shop, past the mill, past the fields, right up to God, and say:

"We thank Thee for our daily bread,
For seed-time, harvest, sun and rain;
For garners full as Thou hast said,
For ships that brought it o'er the main.

"Dear Lord, accept our praise to-day,
And heavenly manna may we eat,
That boldly we may tread life's way;
Then cast our crowns before Thy feet."

XXXIX

THE RED REBEL

NO one can measure the mischief that this little fellow did. He lived in a cave with strong, white gates at the entrance, and these gates could be shut in an instant. So the rebel dwelt secure, and few ever got near him. But they heard of his doings nevertheless.

He delighted in making trouble. People on their way to or from the market, would often be stopped to hear strange tales about the unkindness of some of their friends, and so a lot of needless jealousy and unhappiness was caused, for I must tell you what these people did not know: these tales were not true.

At other times, the rebel would go about making people cross by saying all the nasty, spiteful things he could think of. And so more unpleasantness would be caused. In fact, the rebel was happiest when he was making mischief.

If the people had been as sensible as you, they would not have listened to such idle tales. They would have believed the best of everyone, and gone on their way.

Now it is only fair to say that the rebel who thus wrought such harm by disobeying his prince did not always mean to do it. If he had stopped

to think, he might not have acted in that way at all. But there! He did not think, and so there was endless trouble.

The people at last could stand it no longer, so they sent word to the prince, and one day a messenger arrived at the rebel's cave. He was just in time to hear for himself what the rebel was like.

Mr. Rebel was just inside his cave, calling out rude names to the passers-by, and jeering and snarling by turns, like some fierce watch-dog. So the messenger waited, surprised and sad, till the fit was over. Then he approached the cave and said, "Don't you think that you are both foolish and wrong to go on like this? I don't wonder that people call you the Red Rebel! You are a perfect nuisance to everyone who comes within sound of you!"

The rebel was losing his temper again when he suddenly thought, by the uniform the man wore, that perhaps he had come from the palace, so he swallowed the angry words and said, "Why do you call me that? I'm not a rebel!"

"You may not think you are, but you are because you don't think! When you speak angrily or unkindly, you are not only breaking the prince's laws but you are also breaking his heart. But there! I have not come to lecture you. I am the bearer of a message from the prince. He wants you to enter his service, so that you need never be called rebel again."

"But what does he want me to do?" asked the other, feeling more ashamed than he wanted the messenger to see.

"You can serve the prince by being Truthful, Obliging, Nice to everyone, Gentle, Uncomplaining, and Encouraging. If you will give me your promise to be that, then he will confer a new title on you."

"Very well! I'll promise. What is the title?"

"What I have said. You will find that the first letter of each word spells T-O-N-G-U-E. That is the name by which the prince wants you to be known."

"Well, it certainly sounds better than rebel!" And henceforth, the man in the red cave with the ivory gates tried to please his prince.

We have all seen the cave and we know who lives in it. We must see to it that instead of being a rebel, its occupant always does the bidding of the prince.

XL

GLUM OR GLAD?

CARRIO was cross! Because he had a holiday, of course it must rain, and the picnic was off! So he stood at the window looking out, and making himself utterly miserable.

Mother suggested that he should get his Meccano and build something, but he didn't want to do that. He wanted to go out! And even when the rain pattered against the panes to attract his attention, and the drops said, "Watch us have a race down the window," that was no good. He grumbled worse than ever.

When dinner-time came, you can guess how he looked. His face was all puckered up and the corners of his mouth were down. If little folk knew what they look like when they are cross, they would not get peevish again.

Carrio didn't want any dinner. He grumbled at the meat. He grumbled at the pudding. And he was just beginning another growl when mother said, "Why, it has stopped raining! I believe it is going to clear up. You will be able to go out this afternoon, and I would like you to leave some eggs at old Mrs. Dawson's, down in the village. She has been so ill, and——"

"I don't want to! It's no good going out now," broke in Carrio.

"But why?" asked his mother. "You were grumbling all morning because you could not go out, and now you don't want to! You *are* a boy! Never mind! I will leave the eggs myself. I had a little surprise for you; but it doesn't matter!"

Carrio slouched off to the breakfast-room, glum as could be. "I'm sick of everything!" he exclaimed. "There! it's school again to-morrow. I hate it!" And he went on like this until bed-time, making everyone nearly as miserable as himself.

He was just in bed when a visitor arrived, and a queer visitor he was! A strange little man jumped on the bed, and cried, "Hello, Glum! You've had a grand time to-day. I've heard you. Now you must come with me!"

"But I don't want. . . ." Carrio began.

"No 'buts,' my boy! I'm going to give you the chance of your life."

The boy, seeing he could not help himself, got up, and they went on until they came to a hospital. They entered a long room filled with beds. "Hop in here!" said the man, stopping beside one of the beds. "You were complaining to-day about going out. Change places with this little chap here; there's something the matter with his back, and he can never go out to run and jump like you can. I think it is just the thing for you to change with him!"

"I didn't mean that," said Carrio. "Please let me go back, and I'll never grumble about going out again."

"Well, next time you feel like grumbling, I want you to say, 'Shall I be glum or glad?'"

"Yes, I'll promise," Carrio agreed.

"Right! We'll go. No, not that way. We haven't done yet!"

They came to a poor room where a weak woman was working a sewing-machine, and she was just saying to her two hungry children, "Be brave, dearies. As soon as I finish this work we shall have some money, and then I'll get something for you to eat. Won't that be good!"

"Strikes me this is just the place for you, Carrio. No dinners to grumble about here!"

But the boy, almost in tears, said, "Let me go back. You know I've promised."

"What! Glum or glad? Good! But we haven't finished yet!"

This time it was a hot country, where the people were savage and ignorant. "Just the place for you, my boy!" said the guide again. "No schools, not even a Sunday School, though you may get a few thrashings a day to make up for it. A fine country for a grumbler like you!"

"Please take me back. I see now what a little beast I've been, and I'll never grumble at anything again."

"All right! Then it's a bargain. If you feel like complaining about anything again, you'll ask, 'Shall I be glum or glad?' Then see that Glad gets it every time!"

XLI

THE WIZARD OF THE WOODS

THE wizard was sitting in his hut, warming his hands over a tiny fire and looking very mysterious, when three strangers approached.

They bowed low, and said, "O wisest and most wonderful of men, we would ask a boon."

The aged man rubbed the smoke from his eyes, evidently well pleased at the men's words, and said, "And what is the boon ye crave?"

"I want to be wealthy," said the first, "with a fine house and a large number of servants."

"Indeed!" came the answer. "Many a time have I heard that, but only he is rich who uses the gifts of life aright. Here are three bags. Look well, choose well, use well; so shalt thou be great!"

The man looked at the bags to which the wizard pointed. One was small but it was full of rubies. The second was larger, and full of gold coins. While the third was larger still, and was heaped up with grain.

"I can soon make up my mind," said the man to himself, so turning to the wizard he said, "I am not greedy, so I will take the smallest bag—the one with the rubies." And having made his choice, he stood aside.

It was now the turn of the second man. "I

want to be rich too, but I am willing to work for my wealth. There is nothing I would like better than to be a prosperous merchant. Can you help me?"

"Rich and prosperous!" remarked the wizard, looking very wise. "Well, thou shalt have the same chance as thy friend." So putting another bag beside the two he said, "Here are three bags as before. Look well, choose well, use well: that is the secret of prosperity."

"Rubies are not much use to me," thought the man, "and grain is less. If I take the gold, I can buy goods to trade with, and then I can obtain precious stones if I want them, and as much grain as my family needs." So he chose the bag of gold.

The last man came in the same way, and three bags were set before him so that he could have the same chance as the others. "I think I will take the grain," he said. "I want to be useful as well as wealthy, and people will expect me to do good with thy gift, O most wise! Besides, if I plant the grain, perchance when my harvest is sold, I shall be able to get both gold and gems."

The men returned to their own land, each very well pleased with himself, and lest they should forget what the wise wizard had said, they kept mumbling, "Choose well, use well; so shalt thou be great!"

When they got back, the man with the rubies, knowing that they were valuable, put such a high price on them that no one could afford to buy them, and as he was in a hurry to get rich, he would not alter the price. Consequently, he had

to hoard them until some wealthy buyer of precious stones should happen to come along. So he remained poor.

The other, who had chosen the gold pieces, was laughing to himself. "Serves him right! Who wants rubies when winter is coming on? I have a better plan than his. I know what I shall do."

He bought a lot of cloth and costly robes, and because he too was anxious to get rich quickly, he put a high price on all his goods. But when the people came to look they said, "They are very fine, but garments that are not so beautiful will keep out the cold just as well. We must wait till times are better before we can afford clothes like these." So the man had to keep his stock and wait.

Meanwhile, the man with the grain had sown it, and when autumn came, the harvest was very bountiful. He kept back a part of it for his own use, and next season he planted the rest of the seed again. The crops were better still. So he sold his grain that the people might have bread, and they blessed him, for they had known what it was to be hungry. They could live without gems and without costly robes, for they still had their home-spun, but bread they must have.

As time went on, the two who were thinking of themselves and their hoped-for riches found themselves getting poorer and poorer, for with their idle dreams and their shops to mind, they could not settle to work. While he who wanted to be of service to others had gold pieces and rubies as well. He had something even more precious. He had gained the love of the poor folk who ate the

bread of his harvests, and he had discovered the joy of doing good. In choosing well, using well, he had learned wisdom, and one wiser even than the wizard says that "wisdom is more precious than rubies."

The sure way to happiness is to sow seeds of kindness, for the harvest is always plentiful. And the wizard's word to little folk is "Look well, choose well, use well; so shalt thou please God, and so shalt thou be great!"

XLII

PLAYING THE GAME

TWO men were toiling over some rough ground. It was full of lumps and hollows and the men seemed rather hot and tired. Each had a bag of sticks slung over his shoulders. These they would occasionally lay down and then, taking them up again, proceed on their way.

Now this sounds as though they were wood-pickers, gathering firewood for winter, or anxious to get something to sell, but we saw that really they were playing a game, and getting a good deal of fun out of it too. They were using the sticks or clubs to strike two little white balls, and while other children might need to have it explained, you are clever enough to know that these men were playing Golf.

We are just as keen as they were on playing the game, and so we must first remind ourselves that in the game of life, there are rules that must be followed. What we call rules, might be better named the will of God for each one of us. And if we would be successful, and play the game as we ought, then we must learn to obey. What is that but doing what we know to be right? And what is doing right, but being good from day to day? No one likes to play with a boy who cheats,

or with a girl that does not play fairly, and every true soul, rendering cheerful obedience to God's loving will, finds that life is full of joy and gladness. So the first thing in the game of life is *Goodness.*

Then we noticed that these men were playing from point to point, according to certain numbers, for on a golf course, there are 18 holes or goals, to which the ball must be driven. You cannot go from No. 1 to No. 4, nor from No. 9 to No. 6. You must play right on in the order laid down, no matter how difficult it may be. The points are connected by a narrow path, worn smooth by the feet of the good players, and the nearer you can keep to the straight line, not only the better you play, but the more easy it will be to win.

Whenever people turn aside from the straight line of conduct, they find themselves "in trouble" as the golfers would say. That means, there are long grass, furze bushes, or holes, into which the ball drops, and that means a good deal of effort to get it back on to the smooth places again. But if you keep to the fairway, then it is a lot easier to reach the mark for which you are playing.

You know how an ostrich runs when it is being chased? It zig-zags from one side to another, and while it runs very swiftly, and covers a lot of ground, yet by riding in a straight line, the hunter can readily outstrip it. And in playing the game of life, as well as Golf, the nearer you can keep to the line of right, the better will you succeed. So we lay down our second rule: *Rectitude.*

While these two men were playing, one made a tremendous blow at the ball, but while his club swung round, the ball remained just where it was. "Keep your eye on the ball!" cried his friend. And that means a good deal. If you want to hit the ball, you must keep your eye fastened on it as it lies on the ground. And if you want to find it after you have struck it, you must watch it as it flies through the air and then falls into the grass. Otherwise, it means loss of time, sometimes loss of temper, and a lost ball too.

There are other things you must also look after: The way in which you stand, the way you wield the club, the direction of the flag that marks the hole for which you are playing; and as you remember, the Bible says that we are to run the race or play the game of life, "Looking unto Jesus," for He is our Example and our Goal. So let us add *Faith.*

All this means practice. Nothing worth doing can be done without effort and continued practice. A great pianist once said that, although he could play well, if he did not practise constantly, he would lose his skill. "If I did not play for a whole day I would know it; if I left the piano alone for two days, the critics would know it; and if I left it for three days, the public who listen to me would know that I had not been keeping up my work!"

What is true of music, is true of trying to be kind, striving to follow our Lord's example, or of doing right. The game of life will suffer. So another rule for success is: Look how you are playing, and keep your eye on the ball.

Then of course, we must "Play the game." That means, we must be absolutely fair. There are some people who put fun before fairness, and think that some of the rules can be ignored. But in the game of Golf, although there are any number of sandy holes, called bunkers, and obstacles that make playing more difficult, it is the player who takes things as they come, and never tries to skip any difficulty who not only gets most fun out of the game, but who also increases his skill.

We all have to face obstacles and difficulties. Lessons are not always easy to learn, temptations are hard to overcome, but when we set ourselves to vanquish them, we can come out victorious. When the Pilgrim in Bunyan's famous story came to the Hill Difficulty, he found that there were three paths. One skirted the hill on one side, the other went round the other way, but the third ran right up over the hill-top. So Christian took a drink from the cool stream by the foot, and thus refreshed, he started to climb. To his surprise, he found that the hill was not nearly so steep as it looked, for many others had gone that way before, and made the path quite easy to follow. And before he realised what he had done, he stood at the top, and the obstacle that had seemed to be more than he could conquer, lay beneath his feet. He had kept to the right way. He had followed the path of the pilgrim, and so we must put *Perseverance* as our last rule.

Now look what we have: as our guide for playing the game:

Goodness—Obeying the laws of God.
Rectitude—Keeping to the right way.

Faith—Taking care what we do and how we do it.
Perseverance—Not only doing our best, but being our best.

Do the right, do your duty, even when it is hard, and you will find in this the gladness of Playing the Game! And even though you may not get a medal for your play, you will one day have the Saviour's "Well Done!" and that is worth everything.

XLIII

WHY THE LEAVES FALL

THE pilgrim stood ready for the journey. He had his wallet and staff. His feet were well-shod. And as he waited by the wicket-gate, he looked down the trail rather impatient that his guide should be so long in coming. You see, he was young and strong, and knowing a good deal he felt that it was almost a waste of time to wait as his father had bidden him.

Presently, he saw a man approaching. He was clad in a bright green suit, and as he got near he called out to the youth, "Waiting for me?"

"If you are the guide, I am," replied the youth. "I thought you were never coming!"

At that, the other laughed pleasantly. "That's quite all right! I'm generally a bit late. They call me Spring."

"And where are we going?" asked the youth.

"A great way, and a straight way, but the end is the palace of the king! I can go with you only part of the way, however, and then I must hand you over to one of my brothers."

They set off, and as they went, it seemed as though the world was brighter than it had ever been. The lambs were frolicking in the meadows. The trees put on their best clothes and waved

their branches gaily as the pair passed, and the tall reeds by the river gracefully bowed their heads as though in homage.

"They all seem to know you," the pilgrim remarked.

"Of course they do. I forgot to mention the fact, but I happen to be their prince."

So they journeyed on for a time. Then the prince suddenly stopped. "I must leave you here," he said. "This is as far as my kingdom goes, and I must let my brother take you across the frontier." And even as he spoke, another prince approached, coming out of the wood.

He was more handsome than the first, for he had golden curls that danced in the light, and his robes were a soft, shimmering green.

"Let me introduce you," said the first prince. "This is the pilgrim youth who journeys far." And turning to the other he added, "And this is my brother, the Prince of Summerland."

The youth bade his guide farewell, and started on the second stage of his travels.

"Where are we going?" he asked of his new friend.

And the prince said, just as the first had done, "A great way, and a straight way, but the end is the palace of the king."

They toiled on, and now the sun was very hot so that the pilgrim found that even the small bundle he carried was getting heavier and heavier. The sun's rays smote his head and scorched his back, till he was glad to lean against a rock and rest awhile.

The prince spoke to the leaves, and spreading

themselves out as much as they could, they afforded more shelter for the travellers so that they could take their way again. But the path, though it lay through the woods, was now getting steeper and steeper, stonier and stonier. So the pilgrim said to his guide, "It is verily a great way, and a straight way. . . ."

"Yes," added the other quickly, "but the end is the palace of the king!"

"But I am getting weary," said the youth. "I fear that I must be getting old! And look at my sandals!"

He pointed to the stout sandals with which he had commenced the journey. They were worn and cut with the sharp stones, while one foot was badly scraped above the ankle.

"Cheer up!" the prince said. "We shall soon meet my brother who is going with you for the next part of the way. Perhaps he can suggest something about your sandals. He is older than I, and he is as wise as he is good, and that is saying a lot!"

"Will he be here soon?" The pilgrim seemed better at asking questions than at travelling.

"Why, here he comes!" was the answer.

There stood a fine-looking man clad in a mantle of golden brown, and his face was as merry as the sun. "Well, you have come then!" he called out. "I have been waiting for you. And is this the traveller? But I understood he was quite young!"

"I was when I started," replied the youth, "but your brothers spake truly that it is a great way. Just look at my sandals!"

"Oh, that is all right! The way is ever so much better farther along, and we must see what we can do."

Away they went, but the traveller looked for the other prince only to find that he had slipped away.

"Where is my brother?" echoed the newcomer. "Oh, Summer is always like that. You never know when you have him. He's quite a good fellow, but he slips off before you know."

"I'm afraid I cannot go any farther," the pilgrim remarked after a time. "I was hot before, but my teeth are beginning to chatter now with the cold wind. I'm really so co-co-cold! And my feet are sore!"

He was quite right. They had been mounting all the time, till now they were on the high slopes of a hill, where the winds cut through one like a knife.

The young man looked so sorry for himself that the heart of the prince was moved, and he said, "Wait a minute! I think I can do something!" So he spoke to the trees, and they cast their golden leaves till the stony track was covered with a soft, thick carpet. And what is more, through the bare branches, the sun now shone quite warmly, so that the cold winds lost their sting.

"Now we can get along," the prince said.

"I can manage this fine," the pilgrim cried with delight. "The path is quite soft now. Was that your own idea?"

"Oh, quite," he replied. "I have often been along here with travellers, and by the time they get this far after being with my brother, Summer,

they generally feel like you did—as though they could not go another step. And so the Good Father sends me to cheer and help them in any way I can. I suppose that you have found this out by now, that for every stage of the journey of life, there is some special help and blessing. And when the way is rough and the wind blows cold, Autumn always carpets the path with leaves to make it softer for weary feet, and helps the sun to brighten the way. . . . Look there!"

The traveller did as the prince bade him, and lo! the road that stretched out before him was turned to gold as the sun touched the fallen leaves.

"At the end of this track, just by that ivy-clad tree, my brother—there are four of us altogether —will take you the rest of the way. He will be here soon, and you will easily know him, for I cannot wait. He will be dressed in white. His name is Prince Winter. But though it is a great way, and a straight way, the end is the palace of the king! Now, I think I must go. Good-bye."

The pilgrim trudged on, thinking how the good hand of God had blessed him every step of the way. And that is why, from that time ever since, Autumn carpets the way with its golden leaves, and the sun makes the track shine that the heart of the traveller may be glad.

"It's a great way, and a straight way, but the end is the palace of the king!"

XLIV

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

ONCE upon a time, ages and ages ago, the sprites had finished their work and they returned to Wonderland. They had been busy from the beginning of Spring, tending the flowers that gladdened the earth. Now that winter was at hand, they felt they deserved a rest. One of the sprites, however, was very sad. She loved the flowers, and she knew how dark and bare the earth would look without them. She loved the people too, and felt that they would miss the blooms she had secretly tended. Yet, was it any use being sorry? What could she do?

It is very little use just saying we are sorry for people unless we try to do something to help them. So the sprite formed a little plan.

During the summer days, she had become acquainted with a very old man, who loved every flower in his garden. He would totter out with the aid of his stick, and pointing to the beds, he would say to himself, "They seem to remind us about God, these flowers. I dread the days when they are all over."

It was really this old man of whom the fairy was thinking most. "He may think that God has forgotten him," she said. "I must do something!"

You know that in far-off Wonderland, glorious fragrant flowers bloom all the year round. There is neither autumn nor winter there. So one night, the sprite took a number of plants and slipping swiftly down a moonbeam, she came to earth. Then she sped to the old man's garden, and there in secret, she planted the new kind of flower in the beds.

The beds were damp! No wonder the flowers shivered. The wind was blowing too, and it ruffled all their petals till they looked as shaggy as a boy who has forgotten to use the comb. But when at last the sun got up and about, he smiled on their pale, frightened faces, and the flowers turned to a golden bronze.

When grandfather came down to breakfast, he went to his cottage door to look at the weather as he usually did, but he could hardly believe his eyes as he caught sight of the strange blooms in his garden.

"Well, I never! Flowers again! Why, they are not only the colour of gold, but just as precious!"

The old gentleman was almost beside himself with joy. He did not want any breakfast. And when a neighbour passed on his way to work, he called out to him to come and look!

"Hello!" said the man. "I thought the flowers were over. What do you call these? I've never seen anything like them before."

"I don't know their name, but I'll tell you what I've christened them—the golden flower! Have some?" And as he cut a few for his friend, the old man went on, "I should think the fairies must

have brought them in the night! Isn't God good to us!"

Strangely enough, that is just what the neighbour was thinking, and later in the day, when he saw the Chrysanthemums on his desk, he could not help saying, "Golden flowers! You make me think of God!"

This must have been the way those flowers got their name, for there are two Greek words—one is chrusos, which means, golden; and the other is anthos, a flower. From these two words we get the name, Chrysanthemum, the golden flowers that brighten the wintry world.

The *flowers* of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Any in the garden of your heart?

XLV

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

AWAY in the highlands of Scotland, lived old Tammas the shepherd. He was quite a prosperous farmer, though you would never have guessed it from his tiny cottage nor from the rough homespun he wore. Having quite a large number of sheep and not being as young as he used to be, he had a shepherd to help him to look after them, but this was one of those unpleasant men who make a trouble of everything, and the master and he often had words about it.

Well, the man came to the cottage one night after driving the sheep back to the fold. The flocks are usually able to take care of themselves and except at shearing-time or when the winter snows come, they wander about at their own sweet will. But there was a storm brewing, and the sheep had been brought down—all except one. It was missing. The man could not tell Tammas where it was or which it was: he rather thought it was the sickly one with the black face.

Old Tam was like the Eastern shepherds in this: he loved his sheep, not simply because they were worth a lot of money to him, but because they were his own. So he told his man that he must go off and look for it.

The man went just as some children go when

they have something to do which they dislike. He scowled and he grumbled (not that you are ever like that!), then he trudged up the hillside again in search of the lost.

He was soon back. No! he had not found the sheep. The fact was, his supper was ready, and he knew that even though he were to spend an hour looking for the sheep, he would not be paid anything more at the end of the week, and he thought more of that than anything else.

"It's nae use. The clouds are coming up, and it looks like a bad night," he said, and leaving Tammas as angry as could be, he went home.

There was no doubt about it: the old shepherd was put out. He did not like to think of a sick sheep on the hillside all night if, as it looked, there was going to be a snowstorm.

"If Jock were only here. . . . He'd have stayed out half the night before he'd have given up."

But Jock was not there.

That made Tammas sadder still, for Jock was his only son. He had been a foolish lad. He had done something very wrong, and running away from home, nothing had been heard of him for months.

The old man went in and sat by the fire, thinking all the time about the sheep, yet telling himself that perhaps it would be all right. Should he take his dog and range the hills till he found it?

But his rheumatism was bad, and . . . As he looked up, he saw the snow was beginning to fall thickly. Great flakes were swirling against the windows while the wind was howling like some

horrid witch. It was going to be an awful night!

There was nothing to do now. Even if his wife were sure, as she said she was, that the sheep would get cover somewhere, there was the chance Tam might slip over a precipice in the storm should he venture out.

Before he went to bed that night, Tammas took down the big old Bible as he always did, and by a strange chance, it opened just at his favourite chapter. You know the one; it is where it tells about the Good Shepherd who went forth seeking the lost sheep. So it was little wonder that when the old man lay down, he could not sleep thinking about what the other Shepherd had done and *he* had not!

It is always best to do what we think right straight away. Tammas felt that, and at last he could lie there no longer. Getting dressed, he crept downstairs, and calling his dog, they set out.

The storm seemed to have abated a little, though the snow pelted his face and almost blinded him, while the wind seemed bent on pushing him back. As he battled on, he could not help wondering what his neighbours would think if they knew that he had left his snug bed just for the sake of a poor sickly sheep. "They'd say I was clean daft," he muttered to himself, for it is quite certain that, unless they had been reading the same story, they could never understand how he felt.

The dog was scouring the hill a little way ahead as though he knew exactly what they had left the warm house for, and the shepherd was calling to him from time to time so that they should not lose one another in the storm.

"What was that?" The old man listened for a moment, holding his plaid tightly about him. "No! it's only the wind. Must be mistaken."

Tammas shouted again.

Yes! There it was. There was no mistaking that. Someone up there was answering, and calling for help!

The old man needed no urging. The snow had ceased now, and a glint of the moon showing through the scurrying clouds enabled him to strike where he thought the track ought to be.

Soon he came to a hollow in the shoulder of the hill, and there was a dark something huddled against the rock.

"Hi, there! Who is it?"

The glad bleat of a sheep answered him, and then a man's voice said, "Father!"

"Why, it's Jock! Jock, ma ain laddie, what are ye doing here? Sakes but the lad's wet through!"

"I was coming home, father. Will you forgive? I had to take the track over the hills, and just as the storm broke, I slipped, and my ankle's sprained. I managed to crawl to the shelter of this rock, and I was hoping that somebody might come along in the morning. Here's one of our sheep. She knew the call, and she's helped to keep me from freezing. Was she straying?"

Day was nearly breaking when the three at last reached the cottage, and a strange picture they made. There was the shepherd, with a bedraggled youth leaning on his arm as he hobbled painfully along, while the sheep followed slowly, stopping now and then to look for a tuft of grass

yet always keeping near. But there was no one to see, only the angels and God.

The dog had run back to the cottage. He had barked so loudly and so long that the old wife had come down to see what was the matter, and when the little party got to the door, there was such a welcome!

The boy was back again. And as they sat before the fire, the old father was saying, "How did I come to look for you, ma lad? But I didn't. It was for the sheep. . . . I was reading the nicht aboot the Guid Shepherd—you ken fine what I mean. And there was this one that Rob had left up there, so I had to go. And I found you! But I'd rather have found you than a hundred!"

XLVI

THE POET AND THE POTTER

A STRANGE old poet of Persia, when out for a walk one evening, called at the potter's workshop. The potter had just gone out, and so the poet decided to wait there till he returned. The place was deserted, and the poet was surprised to hear voices. He looked, and there, sure enough, he discovered who it was.

Along the shelves round the shop, stood a number of half-finished vessels, of all shapes and sizes, and they were chattering away to one another in subdued tones:

"I think it is monstrous that I should be made like this," said one. "A common water-jar! Why, at least I should have been something ornamental."

"And you would have been an ornament to any house," chimed in another, "for we are both of the same clay. True, I am only a vase and that does not quite *jar* one's nerves as you feel it, but why didn't he do something worth while?" He thought this rather a clever speech, but no one noticed the point.

Several others joined in, lamenting that they were not more slender and graceful, or that they were so plain, when one huge vessel, evidently very angry, exclaimed:

"Who *is* the potter, pray, and who the pot?"

Now the poet was beginning to feel rather out of place, but not knowing whether he was expected to answer the question or not, he very wisely resolved not to say anything, which made the vessels decide he must be an extremely clever fellow. But the question set him thinking. He too, was like clay in the hands of the potter, and many a time he had wondered why he was being so shaped and what the purpose of it all could be.

We are the same. Each of us is as clay in the hand of the potter, and if you were to watch a potter at work, you would see that he has a great many things to say to us. That cup and saucer you used at breakfast, the plates on the table, have all come through the hands of the potter, and they were shaped by his touch. At first, there was only a ball of wet clay, spongy and soft like dough. He would put this on a circular table, driven by belting and revolving very rapidly, and soon, instead of the shapeless mass, the clay would rise up as though it were some magic tree, sprouting in the sun. If it were the cup, you would see him place his hands in the centre and hollow it out; then in a very short time, there was the cup, in its first stage. It had no handle, but it was passed over to another man, who took a tiny piece of clay, rolled it out on his board just like you might do with Plasticine, and having made a kind of worm with it, he cut off a short piece and stuck it on the side, just where the handle is seen.

Then the cup was put with a lot of other cups, all the same size and shape to dry, ready for the next stage, which is baking. They are then put

into a huge oven like a lot of pies, and for forty hours they have quite a warm time of it. Then they are left to cool for two days, and the next step is ready for them. This is the glazing. If they were not finished with glaze, they would still be porous, and the tea would ooze out, so they are dipped into pans of liquid glaze, and then they are baked again.

But cups are not very pretty unless there is some design on them—flowers or lines—so they go then to be painted, either by hand or to have transfers put on them. Perhaps there is also to be some gold, so this too must be added. And then they go to be baked for the third time. When they come out of the oven now, the gold will look quite dark and dull, so it is burnished. Then the gilt work shines brightly, just like real gold, and when the cups stand on the breakfast table, they reflect the light of the sun splendidly. Eighteen different things are done to the china before it has finished its journey from the rough material to the perfect cup.

We are clay in the hands of our Heavenly Potter, and we must see to it that we are responsive to His touch so that we may be a vessel meet for the Master's use. For while there are vessels for all purposes, and of all shapes and sizes, yet if we let Him do His will in us, we shall all be fit for His service, and do something for Him. Of course, in part, we can help to make our lives what He wants them to be, for in the habits we form, the kind actions we do, we are shaping our character. And so that the rough clay may be beautiful to look upon, adorned with lovely lines or

figures, there must be the painting of the Heavenly Artist upon them, as well as the glaze—the polish of good temper and good manners.

The lost art of porcelain enamel was rediscovered by Bernard Palissy, a famous French potter of the fifteenth century. He worked so long trying to find the secret that his family was reduced to poverty, and even his furniture had been burned to keep the fires going. At last, when he discovered the ingredients that formed the combination, he found he still wanted a piece of gold to complete it, and it was only when his wife, remembering her wedding-ring gave that in love for her husband and his work, that success was assured.

It costs a good deal to be all Christ wants us to be, but He pays the greater part of the price. He has made it possible for us to become like Him, and when our lives are at last complete under His hand, then there will be the gold of good humour, of kindness and love, and the beauty of holiness shining in the character, so that we shall grace the board of the Heavenly King.

We must try every day to be what our Lord wants. And though we may have but the humble service of being the cup that offers a draught of cool water to the thirsty soul, our life shall not be in vain.

XLVII

ROBIN REDBREAST

DO you know how the robins got their name? What! you don't? Well, how did they come to have red breasts?

Once upon a time, long before there were railways, there was a traveller whose way ran among the lonely mountains, and having heard that there were robbers lurking there—at least, the people of the village he reached late one night said so—he was not eager to go any farther alone. So he decided to wait for a few days, until perhaps, some other travellers might come along who were going the same way. Then they could form a party and find safety in numbers.

He waited for a week, but no one came, and so he determined to set off alone, first thing next morning. But as he was packing his valise that night, another man came to the little inn, and to the traveller's delight, he found that the other was going to the same place.

He explained how he had been waiting because of the brigands, and added, "So, if you are agreeable, I will join you to-morrow, and we can set off early. We ought to reach the next village before dark."

This was agreed. The inn-keeper called the two men as soon as it was daylight, and with their

bundles, and a stout staff each, they started on the rest of their journey.

The newcomer was quite a jolly man. He had travelled far, and he had so many interesting things to talk about, that the journey did not seem a bit long. Good-humour and cheerfulness always make things a lot easier for everybody. And by noon, the two men had reached the pass.

"I don't think there are any brigands about here," said one. "I have not noticed a living thing except those few goats, and the birds, have you?"

"No!" replied the other. "Perhaps it was mere idle talk. It may have been a trick to keep travellers longer at the inn than they would otherwise have stayed. What do you say to a bit of lunch now?"

"Good! I'm ready for mine. The sharp air of these mountains does make one hungry."

They selected a spot against some rocks where they sat down, and unstrapping their bundles, they ate their lunch.

"Shall we rest for a little while?"

"Well, I think we ought to get on. We must be over the mountain before dark, you know."

"Oh, a few minutes longer will not matter. Let's just take the chance while we can. Besides, we shall get along all the faster afterwards."

Strange to say, they both fell fast asleep; so fast, indeed, that they did not hear the warning voice of a flock of birds that had been hovering round, and that had then come down to pick up the crumbs.

The birds had seen something, and to show their gratitude for a splendid lunch, they called their loudest, chirp, chirp, chirp—hoping to wake the two men before it was too late.

Quietly, stealthily, the brigands came down from their hiding-place. They had been watching the travellers and this was the chance they were waiting for. They fell upon the men with clubs and sticks, and snatching up their valuables, they left their victims senseless on the ground.

"What can we do?" chirped one of the birds, for the whole flock had returned the moment the robbers left. "We cannot leave them to die."

"We cannot do anything," answered another, "unless some of us fly to the village and bring help. But those grown-ups would never understand even if we told them."

"That won't do," chimed in a third. "Yet, when they gave us those crumbs, we ought to do something. I'll tell you what! I've got an idea. We cannot bind up their wounds, but we might be able to stop them bleeding. Let us gather leaves as fast as we can, and we will lay them on their wounds."

Off the birds flew as hard as they could. Each one seized a leaf in his beak, and flying back again, they laid them carefully on the wounds of the stricken men.

It looked as though this was going to do some good, for after a time one of the men opened his eyes, and although he was very weak, he was able to tear his neckcloth into strips and bandage the places where the robbers had hurt him. Then

after awhile, he was doing the same thing for his friend and their lives were saved.

The birds, seeing they could not do any more, flew back home, but they were in a terrible state. All the front of their breasts were marked with red stains, and at once a black crow went to report the matter to the king of the birds.

The culprits, looking very much ashamed, were led into the presence of the golden eagle. He was very angry to see some of his subjects in such a disgraceful condition, and he said, "This matter is most grave! Unless you can explain satisfactorily what you have been doing, you shall all be banished from our court for all time. Now speak!"

The robins hung their heads.

"Am I to understand that you have nothing to say?"

Then up spoke the bird who had suggested bringing the leaves, and in a few words, he told how they had tried to help the travellers in the mountain pass, and how, in doing that, the red stains had got upon their feathers. "And may it please your majesty," he concluded, "we have done our best to make ourselves clean, but the marks will not come out."

The eagle looked a little more pleased, but one of the old counsellors said, "But, your majesty, that is surely not all. These robins are guilty of treason!"

"Treason! Treason!" echoed the other birds, although they did not know exactly what the other meant.

"These interfering fellows," went on the old

bird, "have forgotten that men are our enemies. Do not cruel boys climb the trees and rob our nests? Do not men snare some of our brethren, and kill them? Yet, on their own confession, these fellows have saved the lives of two of our bitterest foes. Banish them! Let them be outcast from the sacred brotherhood of the birds!"

There was a good deal of twittering at this. Some thought that the old counsellor was far too severe, while others said that, at any rate, what he said about boys was true enough.

The king waved his sceptre, and a dead silence fell on the court.

"All that our learned friend has said is true, but it seems to me that, although the robins have done what none of us would have done, they have done what our Creator would wish. His Son says, 'Love your enemies,' and the robins have shown that though men are sometimes very cruel to us, yet we can return good for evil.

"The sentence of the court is, that they shall wear this red mark upon their breasts from this time forth, and their children after them. But it is not a mark of shame, but one of the highest honour. They did a noble and kindly deed, though at the cost of their appearance, and I decree that this red mark of unselfish service shall be honoured by us all, for it shall serve to remind us that we too ought to help others when we can!"

There were chirping cheers as the king finished speaking, and so to this day these birds are called Robin Redbreast. They bear the badge of honour that belongs to those who do their best to be helpful, kind, and true.

XLVIII

THE LEAGUE OF LIGHT-GIVERS

"WHY don't you lamps become friends?" asked the policeman one night, addressing a tall electric lamp that shed his beams on the pavement. "What I can see of it, you are all doing the same kind of work although in different ways. Why be so savage with one another?"

The constable did not know it, but he had really touched on a very delicate matter, for the lamps were anything but friendly with one another. It may have been because they did not know each other well. You see, there were so many of them, and they lived in such scattered districts.

Some were in people's houses, and others on lonely headlands round the coast, guiding the sailors with the warning beam of the lighthouse. Some had their place in great factories where the machinery ran all through the night, or in hospitals where sick people lay; while perhaps the least fortunate of all were those who had to stand in all weathers in the dark, draughty streets. No wonder they were sometimes weary of their work, for they were always standing in the same place. And it is not surprising to hear people sometimes talking about being as stiff as a lamp-post!

Perhaps it was because of their long hours and

the fact that they were awake all night that made them a trifle cross. Haven't you noticed that little people who do not go to bed in good time are sometimes a bit peevish and ill-tempered?

The lamps in the side streets thought the great electric lights were far too proud, and inclined to look down on everyone. The oil-lamps disliked the gas because it gave such a good light and put them in the shade, and as for the candles—well, no one had a good word to say for them. They were always what the boys call Waxy, and very easily put out!

That being the case, you will understand that they could not be either very happy or good friends when they were always finding fault with one another. But the policeman's remarks were passed on, and they set everyone thinking.

"After all," said some of the lights, "why shouldn't we be on good terms with one another when we are all fighting the common foe, Darkness?"

So a meeting was called. The thing was talked over for a long time, and then it was decided to form a League of Light-givers.

The Electrics forgot their up-to-date splendour. The Gas put aside its dislike for the rather smelly Oil-lamps. And being now formed into a brotherhood of brightness, they determined to put all gloomy thoughts away for ever.

Everyone seemed delighted until a motor-headlight, who had travelled the country a good deal and was known to be an exceedingly bright fellow, remarked, "We seem of one mind about this League. I am glad to see that our friends, the

Electrics, have joined hands with the Gas, and I am more than pleased that our old comrades, the Oil-lamps, have promised not to smoke any more than they can help in order that the comfort of everyone may not be interfered with, but haven't we forgotten something? What about the Candles?''

''Oh, you don't expect us to mix with common candles, do you?'' asked a gas-lamp. He had put off his incandescent mantle on account of the heat, and he now flamed up in a bit of temper, for he was not quite himself. ''They are not admitted to decent society. Why, in the house where I live, they simply would not think of using candles. We can't have them in the League.''

''Rather not!'' chimed in an oil-lamp. ''They are very old-fashioned and horribly poor. If they are joining, then I'm not!''

At that moment, one of the tall electric standards who held an important position in the city, spluttered and jumped. The others looked anxiously at him, thinking that possibly he had been taken ill, but he quickly recovered himself and said, somewhat jerkily, ''But why keep out the candles?''

''Because . . .'' began the oil-lamp who had last spoken.

''Because they are old and poor? That is no reason. Are they not light-givers just as much as we? I could tell you something that I saw last week—I wonder if I should.''

The other lights brightened up. This sounded interesting, for this great fellow was known to be both brilliant and wise.

"Shall I?" asked the arc-lamp.

"Yes! Go on!"

"Well, a few nights ago, I was not feeling quite up to the mark—congestion of the carbon or something. . . ."

"Perhaps the currents disagreed with you," cried the Gas with a laugh.

"Look here! Who is telling this story?" retorted the Electric good-humouredly. "You are meant to be seen, not heard."

"All right! No offence. I was trying to get at the 'raisin' of your illness."

"What I was saying was, I felt a strange kind of choking, and after an attack of jumps, out went my light. Well, I never think it is any use making a fuss when things go wrong. I just take them as they come and make the best of them. Of course, I could not do anything till my man came round in the morning, and as I wasn't a bit sleepy —being used to staying up all night, you know—I had time to look around.

"Now, there's an old lady who lives in a big house right opposite to where I stand. The house isn't hers. She has only one room. I happen to know that she is very poor, and if it were not for the little girl who brings a basket of good things now and then, I'm afraid she would lack many a comfort. Now I usually give her enough light for her to see her way about, but this night, of course, it was dark. Her cough was very troublesome. I could hear it even from where I stood. So she had to light her one candle.

"Poor little chap! It wasn't very much he could do, but he did his best, and I was glad he

did. I could see that the dear old lady was very ill. And so, all through the night, he was burning so that she would not be in the dark!

"Do you know, I felt quite proud of that candle! If he had thought only of himself, he would have gone on strike. But he didn't; it is only matches that strike! He just gave his life to brighten hers, for instead of lasting several nights he was used up all in one.

"Don't you think that was a noble thing to do?" asked the Arc-lamp looking round at the others. "Isn't it fine to see such unselfishness? I would not have believed that anything so small could have done so much. Ought we to keep the candles out after that?"

With one voice the gas and the oil-lamps agreed with their big friend that the candles should be enrolled in the League. And the gas added, "As they are older than any of us, let us give them the place of honour in our order."

So the candles were made members of the League of Light-givers, and whether you are big or little, clever or not, you must "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works."

XLIX

LESSONS OF THE SNOW

BAH! Snow again!" Mr. Hyam Evercross turned from the window of his breakfast-room to the fire he had left, and sat down again. He was cross. In fact, he was Evercross—that was his name and he lived up to it!

What was the matter with him? you ask. Nothing much. He wanted to go out that morning, that was all, and being quite strong and well, he could not help shivering when the snow came. Poor people who had only half the clothes that Hyam wore, and who never had half as much to eat, whose boots let the cold slush in—these could go out in the vilest of weather, and they could not possibly feel the cold as he did! That is why he did not relish walking through the slushy streets.

But you will ask now, "Why did he not call a cab if he didn't like walking in the snow?"

Ah, that proves that you do not know Mr. Evercross. He was not poor. He could have hired half-a-dozen cabs if he liked. But the fact was, he had always to find something to grumble at, and the snow was something that did not often give him a chance.

His man brought in the breakfast, and politely wished his master Good Morning! But Hyam did not answer for he was not like you—you always

remember your manners, and you don't sulk when things are not to your liking!

James retired from the room as quickly as he could, and he muttered to himself, "The wind's in the east again! We're in for another day of it!" Though I do not think he meant that the day was going to be windy so much as breezy!

Hyam did not eat anything. "Who wants breakfast a morning like this?" he growled. "How am I to get to the city?" And it did not improve his temper a bit when a boy hurled a snow-ball at him later, which sent his hat rolling along the street.

I hope that you would never throw snow-balls at old gentlemen in the street, because it is not quite fair. It is not playing the game. But in this case, I am not very sorry for Hyam deserved a good deal more.

Well, he got to the city all right, though he managed to make most people miserable who came within sound of his sharp tongue. And it was as much as the car conductor could do to keep from telling Hyam what he thought of him.

That night, when the house was quiet and Hyam Evercross sat in the firelight to save the gas, a strange little elf blew into the room. He kept as far from the fire as he could, and he called across the room, "Well, sir! How now?"

Hyam had to look twice before he could see anyone, then he growled, "Well? No, decidedly not! I am far from well after a day like this! But who may you be?"

"I am the Prince of the Snowflakes," was the reply.

"Are you! Well, I wish you had kept them to

yourself instead of making such a mess of the streets."

"Come, come, come," said the prince. "Why talk like that?"

"I will do nothing of the kind," replied he. "Why should I come with you?"

"Well, that is not quite what I meant when I said come, but still it is not a bad idea. Suppose you do come with me. I may be able to show you something you have never seen before."

If there was anything that Mr. Evercross did not like it was to have to go out when once he had got back to the cosy fire, but there was no help for it. The little prince pulled at his dressing-gown, and soon they were floating through space as well as Peter Pan could do it!

"Where are we going?" asked Mr. Evercross, rather angrily.

"To what is called the Black Country—where your old smoky chimneys have nearly spoiled the glory of God's beautiful earth," was the answer. "You will see what I have done there."

Soon they came to it, and Hyam did open his eyes! They were open before, of course, but now they were wider than ever! It was as though a magician had been at work for the whole country-side was changed.

"Well, do you like it?" asked the prince. "Not bad for one night's work, is it?"

"I think it is wonderful," cried the man. "I never thought the snow could have made such a difference. Why, it used to be horrible looking out from the train. But, unhappily, it can't last."

"But why do you say that? Surely it is better

to have things looking beautiful even if it is only for a few hours than always to have them ugly. And why don't you try to make things a bit better in the world? You are always complaining about people and making the most of their bad points. Why don't you look for the best? And they are all the better for hearing a good word now and then, instead of being reminded of their faults."

The man listened. No one had ever dared to speak like that to him before. Then he took out his notebook and wrote by the light of the moon, "Note: It is worth while making the best of things, no matter how ugly they may be!"

They now went on to the open country.

"Look at this field," said the prince. "Now listen! Can you hear anything?"

"No," replied Hyam. "What should I hear?"

"Well, last week I was passing this field, and I heard a lot of tiny voices crying out that it was cold there. What do you think it was?"

"Not babies?" said the man, for the only thing that cried as far as he knew was a baby.

The prince burst out laughing. "No, no! You are quite wrong. It was all the seeds the farmer had put into the ground, ready for next year's crops. So I just threw one of my white coverlets over them to keep them warm, and now there is not a sound. They are all fast asleep."

Out came the notebook again, and Hyam wrote, "Note: Snow makes the earth happy by giving it a warm covering." And he added to himself, "I must go round some of those poor houses near me and see if they have fires and plenty of bed-clothes as soon as I get home again."

Just then it started to snow again. At first there were only a few light flakes, but in a moment, great swirling masses were coming down.

"I think I would like to get back home," said Mr. Evercross to the prince, "that is, unless you particularly want me to stay. You see, I have an idea that perhaps there may be some one not far from where I live I could help. I can't bear to think that they might not have any coal a night like this."

The prince looked quite pleased. "You have learned some of the lessons of the snow, I think. Well, there is just one more I want you to get before we part. Would you mind counting the flakes?"

Hyam looked up, but though he tried his best, he saw it was impossible.

"I'm afraid I can't, and yet I used to think I was good at figures! These are too much for me. Do you particularly want to know how many there are?"

"No!" replied the prince, "but I wanted you to try."

"But why?" the man asked, more puzzled than ever.

"Just for this reason: you have had much to complain about and I know that occasionally you get cross. Do you know why? It is because you have forgotten to count your blessings!"

Mr. Evercross looked as though he wanted to say something, but could not find words, but the snow-clad prince did not seem to notice and he went on:

"If you would only look up and try to count the

many things you have to make you thankful to the Giver of good, you'd find that you could no more count them than you can count the falling flakes. Now we are back! Remember the lessons of the snow, and the next time you feel like . . ."

The prince's voice seemed to die away in the distance as, with a violent start, Mr. Evercross woke up!

"Bless me!" he said. "Who would have thought it! Lessons of the snow—why, I never thought of them before. Where's that notebook of mine? I mustn't forget them!"

It took him a minute or two, biting his pencil, before he could recall what the prince had said, but then he wrote:

1. Always make the best of things.
2. Try to make some one comfortable and happy.
3. Count your blessings—that is, if you can!

"It is only 8 o'clock," he observed. "Why, James and I could take a few spare blankets round to-night."

And as he pulled on his boots he was humming,

"Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

His name is no longer Hyam Evercross, but one that sounds very much better—Hyam Everglad.

L

THE STRICKEN SOLDIER

A SOLDIER stumbled along a lonely lane. He was wounded and ill, and as it was in the olden times, long before anyone thought of giving aid to those hurt in battle, his officer had given him leave to seek rest and help.

The man had fastened a cloth about his head as well as he could and a strip of rag was wrapped round his hand, but he was feeling so weary and faint that he could hardly put one foot before the other.

There was no one about, and not a house in sight, so that he did not know where he was going, but he felt that it was something if only he could leave the noise of the battlefield behind him.

Now it so happened, that as he turned the corner of the lane, he saw a little way off a fine old castle. It belonged to a nobleman of those parts, though he was anything but a noble man. The truth is, he had a very ugly temper, and he often did such wicked things when his temper got the better of him, that he was feared by all.

Still, the soldier did not know that, which was just as well, and seeing the gardener brushing the path, the poor fellow called to him through the closed gate and said, "May I just come in and

rest awhile on that seat? I cannot go much farther."

The gardener came down to the railings, but he did not open the gate, although he looked very sorry for the soldier.

"I wish I could let you in, but I dare not! It would be as much as my place is worth. The master has given orders that no beggars. . . ."

"But I am not a beggar," said the wounded man. "You can see that I am from the wars. Look here!" pointing to his head, "I am wounded and have a fever as well."

"I'm sorry, but it's no use. If you keep on for another mile, you will come to the village. Someone is sure to give you help there."

The soldier smiled sadly as he said, "I cannot go another mile. But of course, if you cannot help me, then I must lie by the roadside. I am nearly spent."

He hobbled away, but as the gardener turned back to his work, a lady came down the path leading from the castle. She was dressed in most beautiful robes, but the tender look in her face was more beautiful still.

"Who was that soldier?" she asked. "He looks ill. What did he want?"

The gardener told his mistress all that had passed, but she said with scorn, "Afraid of losing your place? Why, if it were not for such men as that, you would have no place to lose. Bring him back!"

"But my lord gave me strict orders . . ."

"Bring him back at once! I will see that a bed is prepared for him."

So the wounded man was led to the castle, but as he crossed the terrace, some red drops fell from his wounds upon the white pavement. But only the gardener noticed them.

The soldier was placed in the bed, and the lady came with water and healing spices to wash and dress his wounds. She bound up his head again, and as he laid it on the cool white pillow, she saw that he was settling to sleep just like a tired child. So she pulled the heavy curtains across the window to darken the room and stole quietly away.

Just as she reached the hall, her husband had come in. His face was flushed with anger, for he had seen the gardener busy trying to wash out the blood marks on the terrace; thus he learned everything.

"What is the meaning of this?" he burst out. "Why have my orders been disobeyed? Who is this wretched fellow you have brought into my house?"

"Oh, my lord. It is a poor soldier who has been wounded. He was asking for a place to rest, and I could not see him turned away. I have dressed his hurt, and now he sleeps."

"Does he! Then he shall soon wake up, mark my words! I'll have no lazy skulking fellows in my house. Tell me, woman, where is he?"

"In the guest-room, my lord."

She saw the look of anger in her husband's eyes, but her thought for the poor fellow upstairs made her brave.

"Please let him stay. He has been fighting for our land. Leave him in peace, if you have any love for me!"

But the nobleman did not stop to hear the rest of her words. He strode up to the room, the lady following. He tore back the curtains and turned to the bed, intent on clearing the soldier out bag and baggage, but his outstretched hand fell. He stood motionless. He was spellbound.

Whether it was simply the brightness of the afternoon sun falling on the face of the sleeping man or not, I cannot say, but a glorious light shone about the head. Instead of the bandages there was a bright halo and a crown of thorns that gleamed with golden radiance, while upon the white coverlet lay the bandaged hand, a red stain showing, that must have reminded the lord of One whose hands were pierced with the nails of the cross.

He beckoned to his lady and stole from the room, and as he closed the door behind him, he said in a strangely quiet voice, "You have done well. I have been blind, but now I see. We are indeed honoured in our guest. What was it my mother used to read to me when I was a boy? 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' However did I forget that?"

LI

A STRANGE NOËL

FAST fell the snow. It was Christmas eve and all through the day, the heavy flakes had been falling, till the streets were deep with cold slush or filled with high barriers where it had drifted.

A poor woman had left her home in a drab part of Paris to go to the chapel where a service was always held on the night before Noël, for she wanted to ask the Good Father to help her children at this season.

Her shawl was worn and thin, and the wind seemed to be taking a delight in dashing it aside and driving the snow into her face. It was cold! And she shivered again as she thought of the little stock of fuel at home and the even smaller stock of food in the cupboard.

She was generally very brave and bright, although her husband was away at the wars. But to-night, although Christmas was so near, she felt very sad. Perhaps it was because Christmas was near, for as she put her two little children to bed, she noticed that they had put their sabots in front of the grate.

The French children look for Santa just as we do, but instead of filling their stockings, he puts something in their shoes.

"Mère," said the boy (that was his way of saying Mother), "do you think he will come or does he pass poor children?"

"Ah, yes," she had replied, "I hope he will come like he used," and Jacques and his little sister went to bed, happy in their thoughts of a knife or a ball for the boy, a doll or a book for Marie.

The mother thought of all this as she battled against the wind. Would the Good Father send something for them? She stopped for a moment for breath, and as she did so, she heard a moan. Looking about, she saw a little boy, sitting on some steps, but he was so white with the snow that she had not noticed him. Who was he? Was he lost?

The little chap could not answer her. He was faint for lack of food and blue with cold. What should she do? Take him to the police who cared for lost children? But it was farther to get there than to take him back home to the humble dwelling she had left.

She wrapped her shawl about the boy, and though he was heavy and the slush made walking difficult, at last, panting and weary, she got to her door.

It was only when she got him inside and sat chafing his little feet before the fire that she saw how well-dressed the child was.

After a little while, he seemed able to talk. "Where am I?" he asked. "I wanted to see where the baby Jesus lay, and I'm lost."

The woman tried to cheer the little fellow, but try as she would, she could not find out where he

lived. His name was Louis—that was all he knew except that "he wanted to see the baby Jesus."

She gave him some hot soup, and then tucking him up beside the sleeping Jacques, she set off again to tell the police that the boy was safe.

Her way lay past the church, and as she passed the people were coming out. Ought she to stay just for a moment? The thought of Christmas and the empty sabots by her grate would not let her pass, so she just slipped into the church, and praying that her children might not be forgotten, she then went off once more.

She had to wait a few minutes inside the office. There was someone already there. When he came out, the chief was saying, "You can depend upon that, monsieur. The moment we hear anything. . . ."

"Pardon, messieurs," broke in the poor woman, "is it about the boy who is lost?"

"Yes," cried the gentleman, "do you know anything about him—Louis is his name!"

"He is safe. I found him in the snow."

The father was over-joyed, and calling a taxi, he bundled the poor woman in, and together they drove to the dismal house.

On the way, he told her how the maid had taken the little boy out to see the infant Jesus, for in France, they have a scene made in some of the churches, showing the Child in the manger, and His parents standing by. But the maid had met a friend with whom she stopped to talk, and when she thought of the boy, he was nowhere to be seen.

"You will see him again in a moment. This is the door, monsieur."

Soon the father had the sleepy Louis in his arms, his heart full of gladness that the child had been found. But the boy was too disappointed at not seeing the manger to think of anything else.

"Can he stay a little longer?" asked the gentleman. "I must go to the telephone and let his mother know. Then she will send the car here for us both."

It must have taken a long time to telephone or else for the car to come, for the father was away for more than an hour. But I think I know the reason. He had told the man where to meet him, and he had been shopping!

You never saw such a number of parcels. He had understood the empty sabots at the fireside, and the bare room had told its own tale. So no wonder the poor mother was overcome. A ham, a turkey, tea and coffee and ever so many other things were carried in, till the room looked almost like a store.

Louis was awake now, and as the woman dressed him, he began telling his father of the beautiful dream he had had. "I was looking for the Manger, but I got so tired, and I couldn't go any farther, so an angel came from God. I told her I wanted to see the new-born King, and she took me to a poor house, and told me that I should see Him, for He was born in a poor dwelling. So I was waiting to see Jesus, and when I looked, it was *you*, père!"

The father's eyes were glistening as he said, "Where we see true love there we see Christ born again. This good lady who carried you to her home and cared for you has shown Him to us. I

wish we could show Him to her. Do you think we could, Louis?''

Louis watched his father stoop down and stuff something that looked like money into the little sabots; then taking up two of the mysterious parcels, he laid one beside each little child.

''Tell the dear children,'' he said, ''that Christ has truly come again to the old world. May their Noël be as happy as you, by your care of my lost boy, have made mine!''

The poor woman tried to thank the good gentleman, but she found no words to do so; she just stooped and gave Louis a kiss on each cheek, while her eyes filled with tears of joy.

Everyone seemed happy—Louis and his father, the chauffeur who had been looking on, mother and the nurse (who had been crying ever since she had missed the boy)—and not least, Jacques and Marie when they woke next morning; while I thought I saw Another whose face was radiant with a holy smile. He had seen it all. It was for His sake, who had Himself once been homeless and in need, that love had done all this. And He said, ''If only people believed that to serve one another brings them happiness, and shows their love to Me.''

LII

THE MAN WHOM NOBODY LOVED

THE sun was sinking fast as an old, old man, leaning heavily on his staff, tottered feebly down the hill. He looked sad, and no wonder, for the people who lived in the city he had just left had not understood him, though he had tried to help them and to be their friend. And now that he was going, some of them had come to the city gates to see the last of him.

They were shouting after him, just as one has sometimes seen rude children calling after an old man, and some of them took up stones as though they would throw them at him.

"Go! go!" they cried, "we are glad to see you are off at last."

What had he done?

The old man stopped and turned, as though he would say something. Then he must have changed his mind, for no one likes talking to rude people, and he went on again, while the men and women, and even the children shouted and jeered as hard as they could.

Then there was a great noise that drowned their angry cries. A flash, another roll of thunder, and lo! out of a cloud came a being with a face that shone like lightning. He held a great book in his

hand, and as the people looked at him in amazement, he cried,

"O foolish ones! Know ye not that one of your truest friends leaves you this day?"

No one answered, so the angel went on:

"Ye blame the old man for the ills ye have brought on yourselves. Ye forget the benefits he has bestowed on you. Remember ye, when as governor he came to this beautiful city, how gladly ye welcomed him?"

"Yes," replied the folk, "but that was because he came full of promises. He said he would show us the way to wealth. He assured us of much blessing and joy. But how many of his promises has he kept?"

The angel looked very thoughtful for a moment, and then opening his great book, he said: "Let us see who is in the wrong, he or ye."

He turned a few pages. "Yes, ye speak true. I find it is even as ye say. Here is the promise of good that the old man made when first he became your governor. But let me read further. To some he entrusted fine gold and merchandise that he had brought with him from distant lands. Some, I see, did trade with what he lent them, and their wealth increased so that all was well. Then they forgot that they owed something to their benefactor and to their poorer brethren to whom the old man had said a share must be given. So they began to hoard yet more and more. Then did their wealth moulder and lose its power to make rich. Is not that so?"

The faces of the people showed that the angel was right, but not a voice answered him.

"Others, I see in this record, were given precious chances of increasing their knowledge, for the Ancient brought with him the treasures of wisdom. But how many learned, as he said, that the way of knowledge is the way of happiness and success? Few indeed!

"Some spake against the knowledge of your governor, and others were known to have slept with his books before them. What wonder, then, that ye have profited little! But the fault is not his but yours. Who can teach those who will not learn?

"Ye blame him for the ills ye have brought on yourselves, but I have heard no mention of the blessings he made yours. Is that right? Is it fair? Answer me!" And the angel looked into the faces of the folk with grief if not anger in his eyes.

Then spake one for the rest. "This man is not worthy of your good opinion, most noble sir. It is true that we have made mistakes, but so have all men."

At this, the people clapped their hands, while one cried, "Truly said! Let our case be heard!"

The man continued: "He gave us some things, it is a fact, but what of the things he stole from us? I was in his service. When I began I was younger far, and strong. Look at me now! He promised us joy, but to many he gave sorrow. He said that we should have all manner of blessings; but there is not one who wishes to look on his withered old face again, for little good has he brought to any of us!"

There was more clapping, but it died away as

a man was seen pushing his way to the front of the crowd.

"Most noble sir, let me speak," he began. "There is one who is glad to have met and known yonder old man of whom so many say hard things." And turning to the people he waved his hand, "Hearken, O ye men! and I will speak!"

A cry went round, "Hearken to Ilan, the true!"

"We have known hard times, but tell me, O my friends, have they not made us hardier though not hard, trustier because we have been tried? Is there not good coming out of all we have seen since the Ancient came among us? There is a bride in your house, O Henryk. There is greater prosperity in our land, O brothers mine! The children are taller; the youths are stronger; the maidens are fairer; and the old are wiser—or they might have been! Surely, had we done all our governor bade us, then blessings untold would have been ours. Yet this is true—we are far better off than we deserve, and that the Good God and my soul doth know. And so know you all!"

The first speaker looked bewildered. He had not a word to say, not that it would have mattered much if he had, for the people were now clapping and shouting at the top of their voices, "True! True!"

The angel waited a few minutes; then making a sign for silence, he said, "We must be fair to both speakers. Tell me why the story of the second was so different from the first. Ilan the true, let us hear you again."

Ilan looked up. "I can tell you that quite easily. My friend has said what he thinks is true, but it

is only partly true, for he lives in a house that is always in the shadow of yonder rock. I have been there, and it is all gloomy and dull. Its window is small, and from it he can see little, while, because it is on the north side of the city and far from the road, he never sees the sun within, nor do travellers pass that way.

"Now it so happens that my house faces south, just on the king's highway. It is where my father built long years ago so that I can claim no credit for that. But from my windows I can see the valley lying there bathed in sunshine, and along the highway pass my friends on their way in and out of the city gates. They never fail to tell me of the news they have heard, of the gains of the market, or the joys that the day has brought. That is why, under the rule of our aged governor, I have been happy in the happiness of others, and I have seen the blessing of many a home. It was his counsel, his wisdom, and his righteous laws, that made us prosperous."

As Ilan ceased, the angel said, "You speak well, my friend, and what is more, your words ring true. Listen all! Ye were foolish and wrong to speak ill of the man who has been head of your city. The evils that came were largely of your own making, and to blame him was unjust. But he can never return to rule here more. Ye have treated him too badly."

"But we will make amends," said some.

"Ye may," replied the angel, "but not to him. His day is over. But when his son comes in his place ye can serve him better."

"His son?" they cried eagerly. "Has he a son

then? And is he to be our governor? Then will we serve him well for the good his father made ours."

"He will be here ere the old man passes out of sight, and ye shall know him for he is young and he will bear the mystic figures on his breast that your calendars boast. For one year he will rule over you as governor of your city. Thus saith my Lord the King!"

And the angel was gone! But a voice was heard in the distance, crying,

"A happy New Year to you all."

THE END